

DISCOURSES

Concerning the

EVER-BLESSED TRINITY,

V I Z.

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| I. <i>The Folly of Atheism.</i> | VII. <i>Jesus Christ the Image of God.</i> |
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Useful for all, but especially the Sensible Laity.

By the AUTHOR of *The Divine Right of EPISCOPACY.*

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THE
PREFACE.



THE Apostasy, or Defection from Christianity, which has lately broke out in this Kingdom, especially amongst those who ought to be Teachers of sounder Doctrines; as it has moved the Compassion of all pious Persons, so has it excited the Zeal of several of the Learned earnestly to contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints. For my part, I have a long time apprehended, that the Crying up of Natural Religion, the insolent Pleading for Free-thinking, and the general Corruption of Manners amongst us, would end in *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, or even *Atheism* itself.

Wherefore, considering with myself what I might do in my Station towards checking, at least, these growing Evils; I applied myself impartially to the Study of that Part of my Profession which relates to the Scripture-Doctrine concerning the Ever-blessed Trinity: And finding myself thereby confirmed in what I was Baptized into, and what I was taught from my

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Youth up, and farther improved in the Knowledge of those Creeds which are embraced in this, or rather the Catholick Church; I resolved to compose the following *Discourses* which I now expose to the Perusal of the Publick.

Wherein, suspecting Atheism (whether Speculative or Practical, is not material here to enquire) to be at the Bottom of our present Innovations, particularly amongst our self-conceited and debauch'd Wits, who will believe nothing but what their corrupt and shallow Reason can comprehend: I begin by shewing the *Folly of Atheism*; by describing the Nature of GOD, from his proper Names in the Old and the New Testament; and by demonstrating his Existence with suitable Arguments, as in *Discourses I. and II.* Then coming to the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is my main Aim in this Treatise, after I have asserted the Unity of the Godhead, I establish the Trinity of the Divine Persons; 1. in general; and, 2. in particular, by enlarging upon the Form of the Christian Baptism, as it is set forth in the Apostles Creeds, and paraphrased by our Church in its Catechism, as in *Discourses III. and IV.* Afterwards, proceeding upon the same Subject, I maintain, according to the *Nicene and Athanasian Creeds*, the Doctrine of the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*, his Consubstantiality, and Coequality with the Father; his Mediatorial Image or Representation of him, and his Divine Worship; by explaining and confirming some of the most celebrated and controverted Passages of the
New

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New Testament, relating to those Heads, against the *Arians* and *Socinians*, as in *Discourses* V, VI, VII, and VIII. to which I subjoin *Discourse* IX. concerning his Incarnation, to oppose certain Heresies about it; but chiefly that against his Human Soul. Then I muster up what occurs to me anew, and what, for Brevity's-sake, I had pass'd over before, to complete the Proof of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, and of his being the third Person in the glorious Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son: I shew in particular, wherein he is another Paraclete than *Jesus Christ*, and how his Ministration is perpetual on Earth: And I set forth in general the Office of a *Paraclete*, with a special Regard to him, as in *Discourses* X. and XI. And because I charitably hope, that the Case of the Adversaries is not yet desperate, I conclude with *Discourse* XII. concerning the Punishment of Apostasy, that others at least may take this Warning. I have not omitted to speak of the Simplicity of God, the Eternity of the Son, and even the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and of other incident Points. So that I am apt to think, that these *Discourses* may pass as a System of Theology, strictly so called; so far as is necessary in the present Conjunction, for the Sensible Laity, [whether Members of this Church, or Dissenters] for whose Use it is chiefly intended.

And therefore, to deliver these Doctrines as plainly as I could, I have chosen the didactical or instructive Way, avoiding all Schola-

stick Terms that are used in this Controversy, but those whereof the Meaning is well known; and abstaining from all intricate Reasoning and Wrangling. For which purpose, I have also digested my Matters into the Form and Style of *Discourses* or *Sermons*, as the most popular and pathetick Method.

But because Mr. *Whiston*, then of the University of *Cambridge*, and Mr. *Clendon*, of the *Middle-Temple, London*, have appeared lately and eminently in Print; the one with a Shew of Learning, as a Reviver of the *Arian* and other Heresies, or rather as an universal Reformer; and the other with a Sample of Argument, as an Asserter of the *Socinian* Hypothesis: I have thought myself engaged, by my general Design, to have a particular Regard in my Prosecution of it to those two Authors. Now as I did not intend this for a Controversial Treatise, that I might not be too much interrupted in my Method by Citations, I have for the most part only set down References to their Books; to the end the Reader, if he has before, or will after, or with it peruse them, may compare both Sides together, and judge for himself, as he sees Cause. As to the former of these Writers, I am not conscious that there is any of his Questions, his Positions of the Primitive Faith, or his N. B. and Observations, (as far as I conceive them) Heterodox and Material, but is here answer'd. It is true, I have not taken notice of his Testimonies of the Fathers of the First and Second

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cond Centuries, partly because they do not fall within the Compass of my Undertaking, *viz.* to deliver the Scripture-Doctrine concerning the Trinity, and the Incarnation; and partly because, (to say no more at present) if they contradict it, they are not to be received. (Besides that the Learned and Judicious Dr. *Waterland*, in his Vindication of Christ's Divinity, has fully cleared the Doctrine of the *Ante-Nicene* Fathers concerning this Matter, against his, and Dr. *Clarke's* Misrepresentations.) Neither of his Account of the Primitive Doxologies, except those mentioned in the New Testament, for the same Reasons; but chiefly because it is already done by abler Hands, Dr. *Mangey*, and Mr. *Berriman*. Nor even of that of the most ancient Creed; because as some of them are of private Interpretation, and condemned, as namely, the shorter and the longer Symbol of *Eunomius*; so he can make but a Negative Argument out of the others against the Co-essentiality and Co-equality of the Son and the Holy Ghost to the Father: The Church probably having had no Occasion, either from the Hereticks being considerable in Number, or Influence, or from the Conveniency of meeting in Councils, fully to vindicate the Divinity of both, till the General Synod of *Nice*, and the Time of S. *Athanasius*.

As to the other Writer, passing by his Cavilling, I have answer'd likewise what looks like Reasoning in him; and set the Orthodox
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in Opposition to his *Socinian* Doctrines; by References in the same manner to his Book; leaving the impartial Reader to judge. So that I humbly hope, these *Discourses*, such as they are, will also be a good Antidote against the Poison of both these Mens fatal Tenents.

I might have used the same Method with Doctor *Clarke's* Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, who carries on the same Design, in a second Edition of his Book, with his *quondam* Fellow-Chaplain (to the late Bishop of *Ely*); tho' with more Reservedness and Modesty; but that I found myself prevented by the Pious and Learned *Robert Nelson* Esq; now with God, and Doctor *Bennet*, who have fairly animadverted upon it in their several Performances. However, I presume that these *Discourses*, without References to it, will not be useless, but may serve likewise as some Preservative against its pernicious Errors.

And here I cannot but lament the hard Fate of the Church of *England*, that whilst the Sectaries of every Denomination are indulged in all their Ways, it has not met hitherto with an Opportunity to vindicate, by its Convocation, the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion; and effectually to maintain the Authority of the Catholick Church, and its own, against the daring Assaulters of them. That very same Reviver, as he pretends, of Primitive Christianity, after he had alledged what he could against the received Doctrine of the
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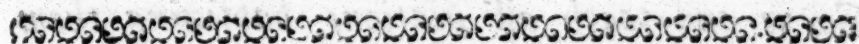
Trinity, tells the World very ingenuously, *Append. to Vol. IV. pag. 10.* "As to myself, I
 "confess, I look upon Councils, especially
 "General Councils, to have been the grand
 "Engine of the Devil, for the Destruction
 "of the Purity of the Christian Faith and
 "Practice; and that they have actually prov-
 "ed so in the past Ages of the Church."
 And then, (*pag. 25.* humbly, as he wordeth it) he humbly moves those in Authority, that if the common Opinions appear not only destitute of, but contrary to the Evidence of Scripture, and the first Centuries, "as I am fully persuaded (says he) they will; that then Care
 "be taken to cast them out of the Church, and
 "to amend and reform all our Publick Offices,
 "Creeds, and Articles; and reduce them all
 "to the Primitive Standards:" A plain Intimation, that he is likewise fully persuaded, that the last things are not so reduced. Declaring, *pag. 26.* (with a Glance no doubt upon the Convocation;) that he valued *Anathema's* not at all. All this is deliver'd by a Man, who, as I may suppose, was Baptized into the Name of the Trinity, brought up to it by his Parents or Sureties, and confirmed in it by a Bishop, after himself had ratified the Vow in his own Person; and who, at his taking his Degrees in the University, subscribed to the thirty nine Articles; at his receiving his Orders in the Church, did the same; and likewise at his being promoted in it, declared his Assent and Consent to the Liturgy, whereof the three Creeds are Parts. Well might he
then

then profess in the Conclusion, *Liberavi animam meam*; having freed himself of all the most Sacred and Solemn Engagements which could be laid upon him, as a Christian, or a Minister, to submit to the Gospel!





A
T A B L E
O F T H E
DISCOURSES and TEXTS handled
in this B O O K.



D I S C O U R S E I.

The Folly of Atheism.

P S A L. xiv. I.

*THE Fool hath said in his Heart, There is
no God.*

D I S C O U R S E II.

The Name, Nature, and Being of God.

*ExoD. iii. 14. the former Part.
God said unto Moses, I am that I am.*

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DISCOURSE III.

The Trinity in Unity.

I JOHN v. 7.

*There are Three that bear Record in Heaven,
the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;
and these Three are One.*

DISCOURSE IV.

Baptism in the Trinity.

MATTH. xxviii. 19.

*Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them
in the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost.*

DISCOURSE V.

The Word Ever-God.

JOHN i. 1.

*In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God.*

DISCOURSE VI.

Jesus Christ equal with God.

PHILIPP. ii. 6.

*Who being in the Form of God, thought it not
Robbery to be equal with God.*

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DISCOURSE VII.

Jesus Christ the Image of God.

COLOSS. i. 15.

Who is the Image of the Invisible God, the First-born of every Creature.

DISCOURSE VIII.

The Angelical Worship of Jesus Christ.

HEBR. i. 6.

And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the World, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him.

DISCOURSE IX.

The Word made Flesh.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made Flesh:

DISCOURSE X.

The Spirit of Truth a Divine Person.

JOHN xiv. 16, 17.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom

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whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

DISCOURSE XI.

The Holy Ghost the Paraclete.

JOHN xvi. 7.

Nevertheless, I tell you the Truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

DISCOURSE XII.

The Punishment of Apostasy.

HEBR. X. 28, 29.

He that despised Moses's Law, died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses: Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace?



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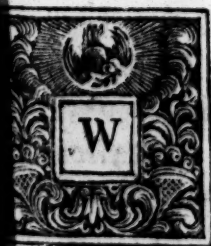


DISCOURSE I.

The Folly of Atheism.

PSAL. xiv. 1. the former Part.

*The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is
no God.*



W H A T Pass is the World come to, what Age do we live in, what Country do we dwell in, that I must go about at this time of Day to prove that there is a God! Or rather, to confute the Folly of such as deny a Truth so clear, so palpable, and so universally acknowledged as that is; and which is the Foundation of natural, as well as supernatural and revealed Religion! And yet it is as certain, as it is to be lamented, that the extreme Corruption of the Age, and Country we live in, does but too much justify this Exclamation, and since the Necessity of my present Undertaking.

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For whoever will look about him, and seriously reflect upon the Life and Conversation of the generality of Mankind, shall soon discover, notwithstanding the Hypocrisy which reigns amongst them, that there is a Spirit of Atheism gone out into the World, and daily gaining Ground in it. The Truth is, how can it be thought otherwise, when we see all manner of Vices abounding amongst us, and brazening it out openly; a general Dissolution of Manners running through all Orders and Degrees of Persons, and Impiety with much ado kept out of the Sanctuary? How can it be thought otherwise, I say, than that for the most part we do not believe there is a God, or have but very dull Apprehensions of it? Or that if we have not wholly blotted out of our Minds the Ideas of it, yet we have at least very much darkened them? For if Men were thoroughly convinced that there is a Being, who is a Punisher of Vice, and a Rewarder of Vertue, and who withal is as present to their inward Thoughts, as to their outward Actions; would they give up themselves thus to all those Enormities, which they make so little Conscience of? would they not be afraid to provoke him, and to draw upon themselves his severest Judgments? And would they not endeavour to entitle themselves to his Mercy, by leading a holy and religious Life? It is true, the generality do not openly and publicly profess that they believe there is no God; the Laws would not suffer it: But there are but too many, who in their private Cabals are desperate enough to own it, and will attempt with Arguments to persuade others to it; so fond they are of that Folly! But if they do not declare it before the World, they say it in their Heart, *i. e.* secretly, or at least wish it: And if they do not deny him with their Mouth, they disown him in their Hands and Works; and their

whole

whole Demeanour is a continued Evidence against them, that they act as if they believed there were no God. This is that kind of Atheists especially, whereof the Royal Psalmist speaks in our Text, when he acquaints us, that *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.*

In which Words there are two Things to be examined; viz.

- I. The Atheist's Creed, or Wish, what he says in his Heart, *There is no God:*
- II. The Folly of it; *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.* He is a Fool in saying so.

As to the First thing, what the Atheist says in his Heart; it is, That there is no God. But here you may take me up short, and cry out, What! Is it possible that any Man should say, or think, or wish so in his Heart? Did ever any Rational Creature fall into such a Fitt of Brutishness, or rather Madness, as to be disposed to deny the Existence of a Deity? The Answer to this depends in a great Measure upon stating the Signification of Heart in Scripture; and therefore I shall begin by that. The Heart then in Holy Scripture, as in Prophane Authors, (to wave at present the proper Signification of it, which I may suppose none can be ignorant of) is used in a Figurative Sense, to denote in general the Humane Soul, with its several Faculties, and Affections: Which is so obvious, that I think I need not give any Instances of it. And this is probably done, because it was always reckoned as one of the noblest Parts of our Body, that which lives first, and dies last in it; the chief Instrument of Life, the Spring and Center of the natural Heat, and even the Seat of the Soul, according to the Opinion of the ancient Philosophers.

But in particular, it is frequently put to signify the Understanding, Mind, or Judgment; that Faculty of ours whereby we apprehend, know, and judge of things: Forasmuch as it is the most considerable Power of our Soul; the Director, and Principle of all our Rational Operations. Thus *Solomon* tells us, *Eccl. i. 16, 17.* that *his Heart had great Experience of Wisdom and Knowledge*, and that he gave his Heart to know Wisdom, and to know Madness and Folly: All which are Acts of the Understanding. And whereas it is said *Dan. iv. 16.* that an Holy One cried aloud to *Nebuchadnezzar* in his Dream, *Let his Heart be changed from Man's, and let a Beast's Heart be given unto him:* In his Confession of God's Kingdom to his People, upon his Recovery from his Distraction, he expresses it by his *Understanding and Reason returning unto him, ver. 34, 36.* It must likewise be taken for the Will, as in that of *Acts xvi. 14.* where we are taught, that *the Lord opened the Heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul:* But especially where it is distinguish'd from the Soul, *i. e.* the Affections; and from the Mind, as in that of *Matt. xxii. 37.* *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.* And lastly, it is to be understood of the Affections, whether they be regenerate, the new Heart, and the new Spirit, the Heart of Flesh; or irregenerate, the stony Heart, whereof the Prophets speak. Both which are mentioned in that of *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* *A new Heart will I give you, (said God to the House of Israel) and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh.*

According to this Stating of the Signification of Heart in Scripture, we may distinguish the Atheists into two kinds; the Atheists in Mind and Judgment, and the Atheists in Will and Affec-

Affections ; or, as it is not improperly express'd in the Schools, the Speculative Atheists, and the Practical Atheists. The first kind is of those, who having harden'd themselves in Vice, or sinned themselves into a Judicial Infatuation, are grown either so stupid, in their spiritual Concernments, as not to think of God at all; or rather so froward, as to endeavour, what they can, with vain and false Sophistry, to persuade themselves, and impose upon others, that there is no God. These are the self-conceited and overweening Wits, who have not God in any of their Thoughts, unless it be, as far as in them lies, to destroy his very Being; and whereof there are but too many at this Day in the World: But who, with all their Pretensions to Parts, may very well be called senseless Fools, or Madmen. These are they, who would set up their refined Notions above the common and vulgar Apprehensions of Mankind; who profess to believe nothing, but what agrees perfectly with their blind and corrupt Reason; and who deny the Existence of God upon no other Ground, but because they do not comprehend his Nature. But how should they comprehend it, if it be incomprehensible? as all Christians are taught it is; and they, as well as others, are bound to believe, if they have not renounced their Christianity, or indeed all Religion; which in this Case they must do: And how should they fully understand him, who is in all respects infinite? Are there not numberless Beings in this terraqueous Globe, which we inhabit, whereof they know little of the Nature, and yet are entirely satisfied of the Existence? This is certainly the more dangerous of the two Sorts of Atheists; forasmuch as they are not content with saying in their Heart, secretly, that there is no God, which were to be wish'd for the sake of others; but do tell it publickly, and study to bring others over to

their Opinion: They discourse of it in Company, and write Books to that purpose. An horrible Impiety, and an unsufferable Impudence, which ought to be timely check'd, and severely punish'd by the Christian Magistrate!

Notwithstanding this, it is scarce to be imagin'd, that these Men believe what they say; or that they are as fully convinced that there is no God, as they would persuade others they are: There are some grounds to think, that there may be no true Atheists in Judgment, *i. e.* such as by their wrong Reasoning can so far deceive themselves, as to disbelieve the Being of a Deity. And indeed, the Sense of a God seems to be too natural, and too deeply riveted in the Soul of Man, to be so easily razed out. It is true, such Profligates may weaken it to a very low degree; and it is not to be doubted, but they try all the Ways their desperate Thoughts suggest to them, to deaden it quite; but it is hard to conceive how they should bring it about. God makes himself be felt and perceived by them, whatever they can do to the contrary: *For he is not far from every one of us*, as S. Paul told the Philosophers at Athens; *because in him, or by him, we live, and move, and have our Being*, Act. xvii. 27, 28. He is *above all, through all, and in all*; as the same Apostle says, *Ephes. iv. 6*. Their very Conscience, which sits as a Judge within them, and accuses or excuses their Actions, by its Remorses, and the Frights it raises within their Breasts, tells them there is a God, an Avenger of Evil. It is in vain for ¹ *Tiberius* to wear his Laurel Wreath, or for ² *Caligula*, that Monster of a Prince, to profess Atheism publicly, and thereupon plunge himself into all manner of Wickedness: He betrays himself plainly

¹ *Suet. in Tiberio.*

² *Idem in Caligula.*

enough, when he runs under a Bed upon hearing it thunder: His Conscience, awaked by this Voice of Heaven, makes him confess that God, whom he is not willing to obey. ' This false Bravo, who but even now gloried in his Impiety, and bid Defiance to Heaven by his Crimes, cannot hear the Noise of Thunder without quaking, and hiding himself under a Bed. The Truth is, whence should proceed those Remorses and Terrors, which are felt in a guilty Conscience, and which sometimes make Men choose Hanging, rather than the Burden of them, but from a Sense of the Divine Being, and his Justice, which Nature has stamp'd upon the Heart of every Man? So that it looks fairly as if there were no true Atheists in Judgment, at least habitually, against the Division I have made of them.

I must own, that where the Question is put, as it is sometimes in Discourses wherein this Subject is handled, Whether there are any Speculative Atheists? it is generally resolved in the Negative, and Arguments are used to maintain this Opinion, I could wish there were no Ground to affirm the contrary; and that there were fewer in this Part of the World, than it is to be suspected there are; or rather, that there were none at all, for the Honour of the Christian Religion, which we all profess to embrace. But since it is known by Experience, that as Vice grows in a Man, it infatuates him; why can it not grow up to such a degree, as to bring him to a formal Infatuation, even in the first common Notions of Nature; especially if he becomes so desperate as to think it for his Ease and Interest to shake them quite off? I do not see how

*' Hi sunt qui trepidant, & ad omnia fulgura pallent,
Quum tonat.* ————— *Juven. Sat. 13.*

the Divine Providence is any way concerned to prevent it: On the contrary, we read of some, *1 Tim. iv. 2. who had their Conscience fear'd with a hot Iron*; of others, *2 Theff. ii. 11. to whom God (by a Just Judgment) would send strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye*; and of others, *Rom. i. 28. who as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate Mind, or a Mind void of Understanding*: With other Passages to the same purpose. But this being Matter of Fact, which is best made out by Examples, I must beg leave to produce one or two Instances of such Monsters, (that I may foul this Paper with no more) which will put this Point out of Dispute, and keep up in us at the same time, I hope, a sacred Horrour against that execrable Impiety. 'One is that of *Matthias Knutzen*, a late most impudent Atheist, who being born at *Oldenswort* in the Duchy of *Sleswick*, and having study'd at *Konigsberg* in *Prussia*, came to *Jena* in *Germany*, and set up there for a Preacher of Atheism; where he likewise gathered a Congregation of Disciples, whom he named *Conscientious*; because they were to follow the Dictates of Nature and Reason. This Man, if I may so call him, denied the Existence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Divine Authority of the Scriptures; and had the Impudence, in a Letter which he publish'd in those Parts *Anno 1674*, in plain Terms to deny God. What needs then more to prove an Atheist in Mind and Judgment? to say nothing of *Vaninus*, *Spira*, &c.

But I must trespass upon the Piety of the Reader to produce the other Instance; which is that of

^{*} *Joh. Musæi Script. Germ. 1675.*

The Folly of Atheism.

9

Jordanus Brunus; because his *Spaccio della Bestia trionfante* has made some Noise in this City, and may have raised an innocent Curiosity in many to know what is in that Book; for which I doubt there would not have been so much bidden, at least by the other bold Chapman, without an ill Design. ² This Profligate Wretch then was a Native of *Nola* in the Kingdom of *Naples*, and a *Dominican Monk*: But being of an unsettled Mind, and a restless Temper, he Travelled through *Italy* and *France* into *Germany*, where at *Wittenberg* he delivered publicly a Panegyrick upon the Devil. The Tracts, Poems, and other Pieces he writ, are full of Blasphemy and Prophaneness, Immorality and Lewdness, Railing and Bitterness against the Clergy; exposing every Christian Doctrine, and sparing nothing that is Sacred. The *Roman* Inquisitors however mistook him in the Title of the Book, which has given me Occasion to mention him here; by which it is pretty plain, he does not so much mean their Religion, as the Christian in general, and any other whatsoever. It is a most Enthusiastick Atheistical Satyr against all Religion; being a feigned Conference between *Jupiter*, *Momus*, and the *Constellations*: Wherein he represents *Jupiter* as complaining of the Decay of the Worship of the Gods amongst Men; and *Momus* as casting the Blame of it upon their Amours and Misgovernment. Whereupon the *Constellations* being advised with, it is decreed that all Religions shall be abolish'd, and the Moral Vertues set up in their room; with such Stuff. Horrid Comparisons

¹ An Eighteen Penny Book lately sold at an Auction in London to a Gentleman of the Temple, for Eight and twenty Pounds; Mr. Toland, with what Intention I know not, bidding hard for it.

² Gaspar. Scioppij, Epist. Rom. Feb. 17. 1600.

are

are therein made between the Fables of the Poets, and the Sacred Histories of the Bible ; and *Moses*, and our Blessed Saviour being shuffled in with *Mahomet*, are styled Impostors ; as God generally in the Writings of this Brute is called Nature. I wish that those who so much cry up Natural and Moral Religion, as they are pleased to term it, against the Revealed, do not copy after this *Neapolitan*, and his Scheme.

And so I pass to the second kind of Atheists, those whom I have called the Atheists in Will and Affections, the Practical Atheists ; who are chiefly intended in the Text : *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.* These do not say it in their Understanding, *i. e.* believe it, as the others do ; they only say it in their Affections, or wish it ; neither do they declare it publicly, as the others will sometimes venture to do ; they barely say it in their Heart, *viz.* secretly : They are contented with the private Enjoyment of their Fancy, and with flattering themselves with the Presumption, that there is no God. They do not teach others that pernicious Opinion ; but they endeavour to persuade themselves to acquiesce in it ; and that not with Arguments, as the former, but by keeping all Thoughts of God under ; turning their Eyes aside from him, and dozing the Sense of him in their Mind, because it is irksome to them. It must be confess'd, these in some Respects are not so dangerous as the others ; but yet they are not less wicked or abominable : For however they may pretend to be sensible of the Being of a Deity, in their Works they deny it ; and act plainly as if they believed it not. Their Actions give their Mouth the Lye ; and the constant Tenor of their Lives betrays their Heart ; and discovers their inward Sentiments, and Wishes. And therefore the

Psalm-

Psalmist, in Maintenance of his Charge of Atheism against them, tells us in the same Verse, *that they are corrupt, and have done abominable Works; and that there is none that doth Good.* The Truth is, what other Judgment can be made of Men who act at such a rate, and lead so vicious a Life, than that they believe in effect that there is no God; or, which is much to the same purpose, and may be meant in the Text, that he does not concern himself in the Affairs of the World, and that they shall never be called to give him an Account of their Works? For to deny the Divine Providence, is to deny the Deity; and the *Epicureans* and *Sensualists*, who affirmed the former, and fancied an Idle God, who stood with his Hands a-cross in Heaven, without taking any Share in the Government of the Earth, were always look'd upon as Atheists; and that justly too. And indeed the Wicked, generally speaking, do not so much question the Existence of a God, as whether there be a Providence, which they would willingly have resolved in the Negative. They endeavour to persuade themselves, that God does not observe what is done under the Sun; or if he does, that he is not much affected with it; but that he leaves all to go by Chance, or blind Fortune; so that they may do what they list with Impunity, and without Dread of his Judgments. With such Conceits as these they sooth up themselves, and lull themselves asleep in their Vices. What our Psalmist teaches us higher, viz. *Psalm. x.* where he enlarges upon this Matter, and tells us *ver. iv. The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance, will not seek after God; God is not in all his Thoughts;* or, all his

¹ Epic. apud Laët. *Lib. de irâ Dei, Cap. 4. Ex hoc Deus beatus est, &c.* Lucr. *Lib. de nat. rerum, Omnis enim per se Divûm, &c.* Horat. *Serm. 5. Lib. 17. Credas Judæus Apella, &c.*

Thoughts are, there is no God. And to shew you, that in saying *God is not in all his Thoughts*, or all his Thoughts are there is no God, he means thereby that he does not own his Providence; he adds a little lower, *verse xi. He hath said in his Heart, God hath forgotten: He hideth his Face, he will never see it.* Where you may observe, that to say in one's Heart, *There is no God*; and to say, *God hath forgotten; he hideth his Face, he will never see it*; signify the same thing; and that the latter of these Expressions explains the former, and implies a Denial of Providence, and Atheism.

From whence I take Occasion to make the following Observations, to which I desire your serious Attention, *viz.* 1st, That such as form a false Idea of God, and contrary to his Nature, as those do who deny his Providence, or any one of his Attributes, his Justice, *ex. gr.* his Mercy, and the like; and instead thereof conceive different Qualities in him, and unworthy of him; are a sort of Atheists, of what Denomination you will. In this respect S. Paul calls the *Gentiles* so by Implication, *Ephes. ii. 12.* where he says, *that they had no Hope, and were without God in the World*: Not but they had a God, for they worship'd an almost innumerable Multitude of such as they titled Gods; but that they did not know the true God, at least as they should, having framed to themselves wrong Conceptions of him, and imagining, for the most part of them, that he resembled the Representations they made of him. The Truth is, that is not to know God, as we should, to conceive him otherwise than he is; but rather to hammer out a Deity, according to our own Humour, and to fall down before the Work of our Imagination.

2^{dly}, That all wicked Men are neither better nor worse than Atheists; but are downright so, at least in some degree, if they remain impenitent; and

and that there is in all of them a Principle of Atheism, which shews forth itself in the Crimes they committ: For they are Fruits of that cursed Tree, as you shall see by and by. *By their Fruits ye shall know them*, our Lord tells us, *Matth. vii. 20.* The Knowledge and Service of God is inconsistent with the Perverseness, and with the total or final Adherence of the Wicked to Vice. *Whosoever sinneth*, says S. John, *1 Ep. iii. 6. i. e.* Whosoever gives himself up to Sin, and persists in it, *hath not seen God, nor known him.* And of these it is principally, these practical Atheists, these Atheists in Will and Affections, that the Psalmist speaks in the Text, as I have intimated before; *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God:* For he immediately subjoins, *They are corrupt, they have done abominable Works, there is none that doth Good.*

3dly, That the Habit of Sin, and the Dread of God's Judgments, which is the natural Consequence of it, and haunts the guilty Soul, is the chief Spring of Atheism. *Some having put away a good Conscience*, says S. Paul, *1 Tim. i. 19. concerning Faith have made Shipwreck.* But there is somewhat more imply'd in it: For a radicated Habit in sinning carries farther; Men thereby from Faith fall into Apostasy, and from Apostasy into Atheism. Now as it is the Interest of the Wicked, whilst they continue in that desperate Condition, that there should be no God, to the end they may not be punish'd for their Sins, they do all they can to persuade themselves that there is none. And as we easily believe what we wish, though never so incredible, according to that common Saying, *Quod volumus, id facile credimus*; they find it no very difficult matter to compass it in some measure: So that though they are not able to put out quite the Sense of a Deity in their Minds; which I own is the Conquest but of a few *Desperadoes* comparatively; yet

yet they use all the Arts imaginable to weaken it, and even to stifle it; which is precisely the Atheism in Heart here spoken of. Wherefore, if an ancient Atheist had any Ground to say, according to the Apprehensions of those Times and Places, that Fear had first made the Gods, '*Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*; we may with much more Reason and Exactness affirm, that the Habit of Sin, with the Fear of God's Judgments, which usually attends it, has made the Atheists. Whence it is obvious to conclude, that the readiest and surest way to preserve a deep and lively Sense of the Deity in our Souls, is by a good Life; for God dwells in the Heart of the Saints, and manifests himself to them by a plentiful Effusion of the Light and Graces of his holy Spirit, who makes them cry *Abba*, Father; and assures them, that they are his Children, and Heirs. *If a Man love me*, said Jesus Christ to Judas, (not Iscariot) to this purpose, *Joh. xiv. 23. he will keep my Words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.*

The Result of what I have delivered upon this my first Head of Discourse is, that whatever particular Causes may be assigned for the Origine of Atheism, as Pride, Self-conceitedness, Affectation of Singularity; to which we may add, according to my Lord ² *Bacon*, a little Smattering in Philosophy, (for a deep Insight into it will prevent that) a loose Life is the most general Spring of it. For nothing blinds the Understanding, corrupts the Will, or disorders the Affections, more than that; and consequently disposes a Man more thoroughly to be an Atheist. The Fate of the *Israelites* in the Matter of *Peor*, is too notorious to keep us

¹ Petr. Arbit. Satyr. ² Bacon's *Essays, Of Atheism*, 16.
long

long in Suspence, whether strange Lusts are not a Preface and Introduction to strange Gods? Which is a plain kind of Atheism in respect of the true God. When once Men become so corrupt, and do such abominable Works, that they do none good; the next thing we are to expect, is not so much that they look after other Gods, as that, with the Fool here, they say in their Heart, There is no God at all. It is morally impossible that the Belief of Truth, and sound Principles, should stand with the Practice of Vice, and wasting Enormities. *If he that committeth Sin, as our Saviour tells us, John viii. 34. is the Servant of Sin,* it is not to be thought that he can be easy under such a Master, or will long endure it so. He will doubtless take the first Opportunity to shift himself into Darkness, and the Shades of Ignorance, Error, and Atheism; as more suitable to his Actings, and less troublesome to his Conscience: Which brings me to the Consideration of my Second Point, the Folly of the Atheist, in saying, *There is no God.*

Sin in general is a kind of Folly, being so called in Scripture; and all Sinners are Fools, if we take the Term right. And not to multiply Texts upon a thing, which is so evident of itself, you may find them so named by the Eternal Wisdom, *Prov. i. 22. How long, ye simple ones, will ye love Simplicity? and the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge?* The Reason is, that Holiness consisting in the Conformity of our Actions with sound Wisdom; it follows, that Sin, which is opposed to it, is nothing else but the Opposition and Contrariety of our Actions to that Wisdom; and consequently a Folly: Which being so, I inferr from thence, that Atheism, which is the most horrible of all Sins, is likewise the Top, and the highest degree of Folly; and that the Atheists are the greatest Fools in Nature. This I am now going to make out: And as I have distin-

distinguish'd the Atheists into two Sorts, the Atheists in Mind and Judgment, and the Atheists in Will and Affections; I shall endeavour to shew, that both the one and the others are Fools.

As to the first sort of Atheists, I prove it thus; 1st, He must of necessity be a Fool, who denies or makes a question of a Truth of the highest Certitude, and which no sensible Person doubts. For Instance; if a Man should be so silly and trifling, as to raise a Controversy, and pretend to be in some Uncertainty, whether there is a City in the World called *Rome*, or whether there was formerly a famous Conqueror, named *Alexander* the Great, who over-ran *Asia*, and some other Parts of the Earth; such an one would justly be look'd upon as a Fool. But if he should advance one Step farther, and should pretend to maintain what he alledged, he would infallibly pass, amongst thinking Men, for one who had lost all his Senses, or was a profess'd Sceptick, who would believe nothing, though never so well attested. The Ground of it is, that they are Truths which are held as indisputable, and whereof we are as well assured, as we can be of any Matter of Fact; because none questions them, or seemeth to be doubtful of them. And indeed, if any one comes to examine himself upon these Points, and to ask his own Heart about them, he will be soon informed thence, that he is no more uncertain that there is such a City as *Rome*, than if he had been there, and seen it with his own Eyes: Or, as to the other Instance, that there was formerly such a Conqueror as *Alexander* the Great, than if he had been present with him, and recorded his Achievements. Now I affirm, that this Proposition, There is a God, is no less certain; nay, that it is more, it being a Truth which has been acknowledged by all the civilized People that ever were, or are yet on the Face of the Earth; by those

those of the old, and of the new World; by the *Jews*, by the *Gentiles*, and by the Christians. There is no Age so ancient, no Country so remote, no Nation so barbarous, but has borne Testimony to it. It has been so universally received, and closely embraced by Mankind, that the several People of the World have been observed to be generally more inclined to Polytheism and Idolatry, than to Atheism; and to be more ready to Multiply the Deity, than to deny its Being, and its Concernment in Humane Affairs. Which plainly demonstrates, that it is a most certain and self-evident Truth, to be reckon'd amongst our innate and sensible Principles. For if it were not so, what Reason could be given for so universal, and so unanimous an Agreement of otherwise jarring Minds in the same Belief? And how is it possible that all Men in all Times, and in all Places, should conspire together thus to deceive themselves and their Posterity? One must therefore be a Fool, and a Madman, to deny a thing so certain, and so universally assented and consented to, as this of the Existence of a God is. *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.*

2dly, The Folly of Atheists appears in this, that the Truth which they deny, is not only most certain and evident; but that it is likewise most weighty, and of the utmost Consequence to Salvation. For let us admitt here, if you will, (but for Argument-sake only) that the Being of a God is a thing doubtful; and that there are Reasons *pro* and *con*; as there are indeed some alledg'd on both sides: Now what should a wise Man do in such a case? why certainly choose the safest part, and whereby he runs the least Hazard, if he be mistaken. And that is, without all dispute, to believe firmly, that there is a God. For supposing there is none, and that we are really

¹ *Nulla est tam barbara Natio, cui non insideat hæc persuasio, Deum esse; Cic. Lib. 1. de Nat. Deor. Nulla Gens usquam est, &c. Sen. Epist. 118.*

deceived in it ; what Inconvenience is there in such a Belief, or what Harm can come of it? Doubtless, none at all. On the contrary, as it is a Doctrine peculiarly adapted to make Men holy, in order to their being happy in the other Life ; so is it also very proper to render them virtuous, that they may be quiet, easy, and chearful in this : For teaching and influencing them, as it does, to be honest, just, and temperate, and to avoid Covetousness, Violence, and Debauchery ; it preserves them by that means from various Diseases, evil Accidents, and other Misfortunes ; which are in a manner the inevitable Consequences of Vice, and must needs very much embitter this present State. Whereas it is infinitely dangerous to disbelieve there is a God. For if we are mistaken, and there is one, he must by his Nature be just ; and if so, any one may see what they are to expect who have refused to own him. A Man cannot be less than a Fool to choose this side of the Question. *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.*

3dly, The Atheists shew their Folly chiefly in the very Reason, which they commonly urge, to prove there is no God ; which I have already hinted at, viz. that he is above the Reach of their Understanding, and they cannot comprehend him. And in Truth nothing can be more foolish, or more extravagant, than this is : For we must for that purpose have renounced the purest and the simplest Notions of common Sense. This Argument supposes visibly, that there is nothing in the World but they fully understand ; for if there be any thing they do not, why do they think it strange that they cannot comprehend the Deity, and flatly deny its Being upon that very score ? Now it is most certain, that we do not only not understand the Nature of all things, but even scarce of any thing here below ; so far we are from fully apprehending that of God above ! We know indeed the Existence of those Objects which fall under our Senses, and of others by our Reason, or the

the Divine Revelation; but their intimate Essence, for the most part, lies so deep from us, that we cannot penetrate into it. So that should we conclude thereupon, according to the Reasoning of these Men, that nothing exists, we should be in a meer Fairy World. This would be not only to bid Adieu to Reason and Revelation, but to give the Lye to the Testimony of all our Senses. If then they so little understand what is exposed to their Sight, if they cannot fully know the Nature of their very Soul, and the Manner of its Union with their Body, and yet own the Existence of these things: Why do they talk of comprehending God, who is infinitely rais'd above us, before they will believe his Being? Must not one therefore be a Fool, and fit to be begged for such, to argue at this rate? *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.*

Such is the Folly of the Atheists in Mind and Judgment, of those pretended Masters of wit, who would measure all by the Light of their blind and corrupt Reason. Of these we may say, what *S. Paul* pronounced of the idolatrous *Gentiles*, Rom. i. 22. who were not perhaps so bad as they, being not formally Atheists, *professing themselves to be wise, they become Fools*: Since they err in the most essential and capital Point of Wisdom, the Knowledge and Fear of the Lord, God in his Justice having given them up to a Spirit of Slumber and Error, to punish them for their Pride and Arrogance.

I presume, after what I have said of this sort of Atheists, that I need not add much concerning the others, whom I have named Atheists in Will and Affections. For it is not upon Reasoning, that they are such, but by Affectation and Design, to quiet their Consciences, when they are troublesome to them; there is Occasion but for little Arguing to confute them. And therefore I will only lay down this, for a full Reproof to them, that there cannot be imagined a more glaring kind of Folly, than that they express in their Practice, which is directly con-

trary to that of all the wise and thinking Men in the World. Whenever we fear any great Danger, we are used to do all we can, at least in a lawful way, to prevent it; that is the constant Method of Wisdom. A Prudent Pilot, *ex. gr.* does not lie down to sleep, when he perceives a Storm coming on; but will prepare himself, and put all things in Order, to weather it, that he may preserve his Ship; and these act quite otherwise. They are afraid of God's Judgments, as justly they ought to be; because they are conscious to themselves, that they are grievous Sinners: And what do they do thereupon to secure themselves? Why, instead of endeavouring to prevent those Judgments by a speedy and serious Repentance, they think only how to persuade themselves, that there is no God, no Eternity, no Hell, and to sleep over these dreadful Objects. But can their not thinking of them, or their wishing them not to be, make them cease to be? does it not rather provoke God to hasten those Judgments, which they cannot help being afraid of? And will it not add Fuel to the Fire? Alas! God was, is, and ever will be, in spite of them. Eternity abides, and draws on apace, whilst their Minds dwell upon other things; and Death, which lets it in, will be the Means to render them irretrievably miserable in Hell, if they do not timely repent. *Consider this ye that forget God*, as our Psalmist advises you elsewhere upon the like Occasion; *lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.* Can one therefore be less than a Fool, if not a Madman, to reason, and act after this manner? *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.*

To sum up all that has been said here upon this Subject: As the Belief of a God is from all Time, even from the Beginning of the World, so have there been Atheists in all Ages and Countries; and the Error about this Matter is almost as ancient as the Truth, though it never was so Universal as to Persons. And yet there was a whole Sect of them amongst the
Hea-

Heathens, that of the *Epicureans*, ' not to mention particular Men, and even Philosophers of other Denominations. There were likewise some amongst the *Jews*, that chosen People of God, since the Royal Psalmist speaks of them in our Text, and that in the Plural Number too, in that and the Verses following. And I pray God, there may be less amongst us Christians, than is shrewdly suspected there are, for the Honour of our Government! Notwithstanding, it is very surprizing, that there should be a whole Family, *i. e.* a particular Profession of *Philosophers* of them amongst the Heathens, since God had revealed himself to them in Nature, and made himself as it were visible and palpable in the Works of it. For, as *S. Paul* teaches us, *Rom. i. 20. The invisible things of God from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.* And it is yet more surprizing, that there should be some amongst the *Jews*, to whom God had manifested himself more clearly, and after a peculiar manner, by *Moses* and the *Prophets*. But it is a Prodigy, that there should be any amongst Christians, to whom God has revealed himself yet more clearly by the Gospel, and to whom he has made himself fully known in his Son, (as far as it is attainable in this Life) who is the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person. It is very surprizing, I say, considering these things, that any of these Men should be Atheists, Speculative or Practical; especially if the Folly of it be so great as, I think, I have proved it. And yet I am afraid, it is but too true that there are many, even amongst us, who entertain Atheistical Notions, if we may judge of it by the sly Insinuations of some, and the Life of others.

' *Diagoras, Theodorus Cyreniacus, Anaxagoras, Protagoras; cum multis aliis.*

But truly, it is no wonder it should be so; since the chief Spring of this fatal Error, as we have seen, is the Impiety and extreme Corruption of Mankind: For Corruption and Error go ordinarily together, and God oftentimes punishes one with the other. And therefore S. Paul, Rom. i. 21. &c. promiscuously ascribes the great Corruption of the *Gentiles* to their Impiety and Idolatry; and, *vice versâ*, their Impiety and Idolatry, to their Corruption; when he says that *they are without Excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened; and they changed the Glory of the uncorruptible G O D, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things: Wherefore G O D also gave them up to Uncleanneſs, &c.* to the End of the Chapter. So 1 Tim. i. 19. he attributes the Apostasy of certain Christians to their corrupt Minds, where he tells us, that *some having put away a good Conscience, concerning Faith have made Shipwreck*; God in his Anger giving up those to a reprobate Mind, and to the Folly of their own Hearts; who having known him, have not served and glorified him as they should; so that by degrees they fall to that Extremity of Blindness, as not to own him. I say, by degrees; for Men do not come to that Pitch of Wickedness all at once: *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*; None becomes most wicked suddenly. But first they grow negligent of their Conscience, and indulge themselves in small Sins, if any may be called so; whence they proceed to the committing of greater Crimes: Afterwards they pretend to doubt whether there be a God; then they strengthen themselves in that Imagination; and at last settle in Atheism. Thus several have arrived at that Excess of Impiety and Folly!

Let their fatal Example instruct us to be wise, by keeping us from running into their Extravagancies:

And be we thereby admonish'd, not only to believe God's Being and Providence; but also to obey his Will, and submit to his Dispensations. To this end, let us *take Heed, lest there be in any of us an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living GOD*; as S. Paul exhorts the *Hebrews*, and all *Christians* in their Person, *Heb. iii. 12.* Pluck we up in due Time all Root of Bitterness, which we perceive springing up in us, quashing down all the Seeds of Impiety; *i. e.* the Vices and corrupt Affections which we find growing in our Souls; withstanding that Spirit of Licentiousness and Prophaneness which ranges about, and would enter us; improving ourselves daily in the Knowledge and Fear of the Lord, and strengthening ourselves in the Power of his Might. In order to which, let us make use of all the Means, and all the Helps, which God affords us in his Word. Read we attentively that Divine Word, and meditate we seriously upon it; and it will make us wise unto Salvation, through Faith, which is in Christ Jesus. But above all, let us earnestly beg of him the Light of his Holy Spirit, which may increase his Heavenly Knowledge in us, and sanctify us more and more upon Earth, that we may be eternally happy in Heaven. And that, lastly, as it is the utmost Misery not to know God; so we may experience it to our great and endless Comfort, that the supreme Happiness of Man consists in the Knowledge and Service of him; according to that noble Confession of our Blessed Saviour to his Father, *John xvii. 3.* *This is Life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant!





DISCOURSE II.

The Name, Nature, and Being of GOD.

Exod. iii. 14. the former Part.

GOD said unto Moses, I am that I am.

QUENE of the most famous Altars of Pagan Antiquity, and at the Foot of which the *Gentiles* practised the blindest Idolatry, was that which *S. Paul* saw at *Athens*, when he beheld the Devotions of that People: He observed then, amongst other things, that they worship'd the Deity at the Foot of an Altar, upon which were written these Words in great Characters, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, *Acts* xvii. 23. There was nothing in the Bottom more true, or more Significant, than that Inscription: And there never was a Temple in the whole Extent of Paganism, upon which it ought not to have been engraven in the most legible Letters. It was an unknown God the Heathens always adored; they worship'd they knew not

The Name, Nature, and Being of GOD. 25

I. not what, as our Saviour told the Woman of *Samar-
ria*, Joh. iv. 22. of the *Samaritans*: For although
they had an innumerable Number of Divinities, yet
they never rightly knew or served the true GOD.
That Knowledge was peculiar to his People, to
whom he was pleased to impart the right and lively
Ideas of himself. Serve then, O ye blind *Gentiles*,
an unknown God; worship what you do not know;
place upon your Altars or in your Temples a strange
Deity; and let the Incense you burn to it, cover
your Eyes with a thick Smoak, that you may not dis-
cern the Object of your Adoration. But as for us
Christians, we desire to see clear in our Devotions,
and to improve ourselves in the Knowledge of that
God, who does not appear amongst us as an unknown
Divinity; being that whereof the Impression was
stamp'd upon our Minds in our very Birth, and is
grown up with us ever since. GOD himself is desir-
ous we should do so, taking no Delight in ignorant
Votaries, and having all along discovered himself to
Mankind, as far as their finite Understanding was
capable to apprehend him, at sundry Times, and in
divers Manners: But particularly when it came in-
to his Heart to deliver the Children of *Israel* out of
the Bondage of *Egypt*; and he commissioned *Moses* to
go to *Pharaoh* for that purpose. Whereupon *Moses*
asking GOD in the Verse immediately preceding
my Text, *Behold, when I come unto the Children of
Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your Fathers
hath sent me unto you: And they shall say unto me, What
is his Name? What shall I say unto them?* GOD an-
swered him, in the Words I have chosen to be the
Subject of this Discourse, *I am that I am.*

In which Title of *I am that I am*, or, *I will be
that I will be*, we have not only, 1. The Name
of GOD; but therein is also contained, 2. An
Account of his Nature, or a Description of
him; and likewise, 3. His Being, or Existence:
Which

Which three things I purpose to consider in their Order, that we may have a true Notion of the Deity.

As to the *first*, the Name of God; properly speaking, GOD has no Name: He is an 'Anonymous Being, not only because he is but one, but also by reason there is no Expression that can fully set him forth. What Appellation would you give him? Or, which comes to the same thing, *to whom will ye liken* him? as he says himself, *Iſ. xl. 25.* We may safely affirm,² that he is all the Names, and yet he is none of them. His Nature being incomprehensible, we cannot invent a Name which shall adequately express it: For we can only comprehend, and consequently utter, what is finite; otherwise our Mind and Mouth would operate beyond the Sphere of their Activity. Now GOD is infinite, as it is imply'd in the very Notion of him. I do not say that we cannot conceive that GOD is; for it is one of the first Ideas we have: It is not repugnant to Reason, no more than to Scripture, that a finite Spirit should apprehend that an infinite Being exists. But I assert, that a finite Mind, as ours is, cannot conceive what God is, being infinite and incomprehensible. So that the Propriety of a Name, and the Design of giving it, being to signify the thing, whereof it is the Appellation; if the thing itself is inconceivable, it cannot be denoted by a Name. And therefore GOD, strictly speaking, has no Name fully to set forth his Nature by.

Notwithstanding this, we ought not to doubt but GOD has a Name, as well as the Creatures he has made; or rather, that he has several ascribed to him in Holy Writ, to denote his Nature, as far as we are able to understand it. To gainsay this, would be in

¹ Merc. Trism. apud Laſt. Lib. de falſâ Rel.

² Cui (Jovi) nomen omne convenit, Sen. Lib. iii. Nat. Quæſt. cap. 45.

effect to deny the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, wherein divers Titles are given him, both by the inspired Penmen, and by himself; and in that Number some are appropriated to him as his peculiar and incommunicable Names. So that it is in vain to dispute, whether GOD has a Name or no: The thing is Matter of Fact; and therefore not to be questioned by us in this Case. However, it will not be amiss to justify it; lest by what I have intimated, that there was no Name that could fully express the Divine Nature, I should seem to charge the Scriptures with fixing Bounds and Limits to him, whom it represents to us as infinite. To this end it might be sufficient to alledge, that it was GOD himself, that imposed, or caused to be imposed upon himself, those Names which we meet with there, to make us acquiesce in the thing; because he can do or occasion nothing but what is right. Besides that the Names, which he has appropriated to himself, have something in them so Sacred, so Majestick, and so Divine, that he forbids in the Decalogue, upon Pain of severe Punishment, to take them in vain. But it is not to be doubted, that GOD manifesting himself thus in his Word, and to his People, he thereby intended to impart to us some Discovery of his Nature, at least so much as is necessary for our Salvation; and in order to that, to bring us into Communion with him. For how can we believe in him, and love him, if we do not know him in some measure? That cannot be; and therefore what Revelation he makes of himself, must tend to that Purpose. Which being granted, as there is no Reason to question it; since Names are given to signify Things, and that is the End of their Invention, and particularly was God's Design in bringing the Beasts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Air, unto *Adam*, viz. that he might name every living Creature suitably to its Being; GOD having specified himself by proper Names, we ought to conclude thence, that they have some Relation to his

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Nature; and that by them he intended we should distinguish him from all others. If they do not yield us a complete Idea of all that is in GOD, that being impossible for any Name to do, they dart however some Rays of the Deity into our Souls, and as much of its Light as is necessary for us to have towards our Salvation. This seems to be the true Reason why GOD imposed upon himself Names: Not that we might comprehend him in his full Perfection, but that we might entertain Notions worthy of him, and might at the same time see by them how much he was disposed to do, and actually did, to save us.

But perhaps you will ask me, Why did GOD take so many and such different Names? Why could not one be sufficient? I answer, that was an Act of his Wisdom and Goodness: He was pleased to accommodate himself therein to the Times, and to assume Appellations as the Occasions of his Church required, and agreeably to the Apprehensions he would have Men conceive of him, and his Conduct. Thus in the Beginning of the World he used the Name of the *Almighty*; or at least *Moses*, who wrote by his Inspiration, gives it him; because it was his *Power* that appeared chiefly in the Creation of the Universe: It was the Almighty, the mighty GOD, as the Historian styles him, *Gen. i.* who created the Heaven and the Earth; Man was then to consider him under that Appellation. After the Flood he made himself known to the Patriarchs by the Title of the *All-sufficient*, as he tells us himself, *Exod. vi. 3.* *I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the Name of God Almighty; (or rather All-sufficient, as it is in the Original) but by my Name Jehovah was I not known to them.* Which is farther evident from the several Places to which we may suppose he refers; viz. *Gen. xvii. 1.* *Gen. xxviii. 3.* *Gen. xxxv. 11.* wherein the *Hebrew* Word is accordingly to be understood in that Sense. But we must take Notice here by the way, that whereas GOD says, that he was

was not known to those Patriarchs by his Name *Jehovah*, that is not meant as to the Term *signifying*; for the Contrary is apparent from *Gen. xxii. 14.* where *Abraham* calls the Name of the Mountain whereon he was going to sacrifice his Son, *Jehovah-jireh*; but as to the Thing *signify'd*; because he had not yet fulfill'd his Promises of multiplying their Seed, bringing the People out of *Egypt*, introducing them into the Land of *Canaan*, and the like. Now this Name of the All-sufficient was very proper, not only to set forth the Deity, to which nothing is wanting, but to comfort the *Patriarchs* in their Pilgrimage, and turn their Thoughts towards G O D, as their All-sufficient Good. This Notion he was then pleas'd they should entertain of him. But at the *Egyptian* Servitude, when he saw the Affliction of his People under *Pharaoh*, and heard their Cry, by reason of their Task-masters, as he then resolved to deliver them, so he thought fit to take up his most glorious Name, and declared himself the Everlasting, or, *I am that I am*, or, *I will be that I will be*: For these two come to the same thing. And why so? Why did he change his former Titles? Because the Church being fallen at that time amongst a barbarous and idolatrous Nation, it was necessary, for their Support, that they should be put in Mind, not only that he was Almighty, able to rescue them out of their Bondage; not only that he was All-sufficient, provided to supply all their Needs; but also everlasting, unchangeable in his Purposes, constant in his Promises, and every way different from the false Divinities of the *Gentiles*. And then, and afterwards, remembering the Covenant he had made with their Forefathers, he styled himself the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*. And why so again? What Occasion was there for that? Because, besides Almighty, All-sufficient, and Everlasting, he would have the Posterity of those Patriarchs, *i. e.* the *Jews*, acknowledge him for their God, who had entred
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into Covenant with them, exclusively of all other Nations. This Apprehension the Church was to have of him, till the bringing in of another OEconomy. At this Day he is called our GOD and Lord, the God of the *Gentiles*, the Lord of the whole Earth: Which are new Denominations that he has been pleased to add to his old ones; thereby to give a more extensive Knowledge of himself, the Times requiring it so. It was necessary for our Salvation, not only that we should contemplate him under the Ideas of the Almighty, who drew all things out of nothing; of the All-sufficient, who enjoys a perfect Happiness in himself; of the Everlasting, who is infinitely exalted above the false Divinities of the *Gentiles*, which are meer Vanities; and of the God of *Israel*, who made that People his *Peculium* for a time; but also as the GOD and Lord who ought to be worship'd every where, and for ever. He has called them his People, which were not his People, as *S. Paul* tells us, *Rom. ix. 25.* agreeably to the Prophecy of *Hos. i. 10.* and by the Redemption of his Son has acquired to himself a new Right and Denomination to the Ends of the World. These seem to be the Reasons why GOD was pleased to take several Names.

And now I proceed to consider the 1st thing I proposed to discourse upon, *viz.* the Title of, *I am that I am*, or, *I will be that I will be*, which GOD gives himself in the Text. But there being other Names of GOD in Scripture, which tend in like manner to inform us of his Nature; since this affords me a fair Occasion to explain them in this Place, I think it will be for our Improvement in his Knowledge, that I take them in according to their proper Order: Wherein I do not intend to enquire into all the Titles which are ascribed to GOD, according to his various Relations, Vertues, and Works, the Number whereof is almost infinite: I shall only speak of those which relate to my present Design,
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and which we call proper, or are used as such; which are appropriated to denote his Nature and Being, and to signify what he is.

The Old Testament then having been written in *Hebrew*, and the New in *Greek*; those Names must be either *Hebrew* or *Greek*; and will be best accounted for by searching into their Origine, and giving the Exposition of those who are most skilled in those two Languages. Now to begin by the former, I reduce them to six, with S. *Jerom's* Leave, as great a *Hebrician* as he was: For being desired by *Marcella*, a pious Woman, to give her all the proper Names of GOD he had met with in Scripture in *Hebrew*, he sent her ten, as you may see in his ¹ Letter to her, where you have them specified. But I am pretty sure he is mistaken at least in one of them, ² which is rather an Epithet or Addition of a Name, than a proper Name of GOD; that is, *Sabaoth*: It was added to that of GOD, to express that he is the GOD of Hosts, over which he presides in a peculiar manner, the Lord GOD of *Sabaoth*. The other Name, viz. *Eliou*, is of the same Nature; but a Noun Adjective, signifying Most High. By such another Error, a Name consisting of twelve Letters has been apply'd to GOD; wherein it is pretended the Mystery of the Ever-blessed Trinity is contained, viz. that of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Which Name, we are told, in *Hebrew*, is made up of twelve Letters, to signify the Three Divine Persons with the double Nature of the Second. But those twelve Letters do not compose one Name, but four together: So that it seems to be only a Subtlety, purposely invented to find out the Trinity in mysterious Words: Wherein the Rabbinical Doctors have been extraordinarily Speculative, studying to find out in the

¹ Hieron. *Epist.* 136. ad Marcellam. ² *Diff.* Joh. Buxtorf. F. de Dei Nom. Hebr.

Words, and in the Number, and Figure of the Letters in Scripture, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity.

But to pass to something more solid and edifying: The first Name of God I must mention is that of יהוה *Jehovah*, as that which is most Essential to him, and, if I may so say, the most glorious of all; which we commonly translate God, Lord, Everlasting. This is that great Name of him, that wonderful and ineffable Name, that *Tetragrammaton*, that Name of Four Letters, for so the *Rabbies* call it: Because, as they tell us, there is none like it; that in the holy Tongue it is the only simple Word that has four Radicals in it; and that it contains incomprehensible Mysteries in its Letters, and in its Pronunciation. There is nothing but the superstitious Imagination of Man has fancied concerning it; one might write a Volume of what the *Rabbies*, *Cabalists*, and even Christians themselves, have deliver'd upon that Subject; some of whose Observations are indeed curious, but others extremely fantastical. For instance, they pretend that being composed of four Letters, the Mystery of the Three Divine Persons is represented by the three first, and their subsisting in one Essence by the fourth. So that they would make us believe, that the Mystery of the Holy Trinity was discoverible to the Faithful under the Old Testament, by the very Letters of that Word. And again, they, I mean the Rabbinical Doctors, and the *Jews* generally, would impose upon us, that that Name is ineffable, *i. e.* that it is not lawful, nor possible to pronounce it; and that if it was granted *Moses*, or *Jesus Christ*, to do it, it was because God taught them how to utter it; insomuch that it was by vertue of its true Pronunciation, that they were enabled to work those Miracles which they did. In consequence of this, and by such another superstitious Folly, the holy Men amongst them not daring to pronounce the Name of יהוה *Jehovah*, have inserted
instead

instead of it in Scripture that of אֲדֹנָי *Adonai*, whereby they would express what is denoted by the *Tetragrammaton*. But why is this ineffable? Is it because it has no Vowels, and that a Word without them cannot be uttered? But it is not true, that it has not its proper ones. And if it be true that it had none by Divine Institution, when God writ it, what an audacious Impudence is it in them to give it borrowed ones! Or is it because it is so venerable, that we ought not to pronounce it; and if we ventur'd upon it, we should thereby violate its Holiness? But certainly if it was too Sacred for the Mouth of Man, God would have forbidden the Use of it; whereas we see he commands us throughout the Bible to call upon his Name, and directs us in several Places to swear by it, and by no other. If it be a Crime to take it in vain, it is a Piety to use it religiously, and very Superstition not to dare to pronounce it. It is then ineffable in this Sense, that we ought not to abuse it, we own it; let them call it so in that respect. And on the other hand, if it be so likewise, because they think it impracticable, it cannot be upon the Account of its Letters, Points, or Figure; and that having been written with the Finger of God, or uttered with his Mouth, it is above the reach of Man to speak it; but forasmuch as the thing which it signifies, is unspeakable, and incomprehensible. So then it was not the Name יהוה *Jehovah*, that could not be express'd, but the Divine Essence and Power, whereby *Moses* and *Jesus Christ* wrought their Miracles.

But this notwithstanding, it is not so difficult to explain (which is my present Business) what the Title of *Jehovah* imports, as these *Jews* and *Judaizers* would insinuate: It is agreed on all sides, that it is a Name God gave himself peculiarly to denote his Essence. The Question then is, what it signifies, and what is its Origine? For thereon depends the whole Mystery of the Name יהוה *Jehovah*. Now whoever is any thing skill'd in the Language,

must know, that it is derived from a *Radix*, viz. *הוה*; which imports to *be*, or *exist*; to which if you put the Marks of the Present, Past, and Future Tense, you will find in it, *He is, he has been, and he will be*: So that in that Name is contained properly this Expression, *I am, was, and will be*, having the Marks of all these Tenses in it. According to this, it is evident, that when GOD was pleased to take this Name, his Intention was to acquaint us that his Essence consists in an Eternal Being or Existence. So that if one would know what GOD is, it is *He that is, has been, and will be*, as himself tells us, *Rev. i. 4.* 'Ο ὢν, ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος. *He which is, which was, and which is to come*: Which is his own Explication of the Word *Jehovah*, than which nothing can be clearer. To which we need only add, for a full Account, why he called himself by a Name that signifies *to be*; that it was to denote, that he is the Everlasting by Excellency, the Cause of all Beings, and a Being whose Word is as permanent as his Nature: Which are the three chief Reasons why he gave himself the Name of *Jehovah*; that setting forth to us what GOD properly is, his Essence consisting in such a Being.

The Second Proper Name which GOD declared himself by, bearing an Affinity to the former, is that in the Text; where instructing *Moses* how to go and deliver the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, as he had promised them, he commands him to say, that *אֶהְיֶה* *Ehjeh, I am that I am*, according to our Translation, and the *Septuagint*; or *אֶהְיֶה* *Ehjeh, I will be that I will be*, according to the *Hebrew*, had sent him unto them. In the Bottom this Term is the same with the preceding, and comes from *הוה* or *יה* the same Root, or rather is the *Radix* of the other, being the Future Tense of the Verb *Is, or Exists*: But whether *אֶהְיֶה* *Ehjeh* should be render'd *I am*, or *I will be*; or one Tense is put for the other, I leave others to determine. It implies, as the former, that

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God's Essence consists in Being, and that from everlasting to everlasting. But the main Difficulty lies here, *viz.* What should be the Reason that GOD added this new Name of *יהוה* *Ehjah* to that of *יהוה* *Jehovah*; and why it is only to be met with in this place? Here we must not argue upon the Etymology and Signification of the Words; it is agreed on all hands, that they are the same in the main; they both denote the Eternity and Immutability of GOD in his Being and Promises: But the Point is, why this new Name is added to the other in *Moses's* Mission? The Passage is more difficult, than is commonly apprehended; and therefore there are different Interpretations of it, each of which has its Abettors. If we follow our Translation, which is the same herein with that of the *Septuagint*, GOD is called *I am that I am*, to assure *Moses* of two things, *viz.* of his Eternity; for he that can always say, *I am*, did not begin to be, and is not for a limited Time; and of his Immutability, being ever constant in his Purposes, which he infallibly executes; since he is not another to day than he was yesterday, and will ever be unchangeable. So that according to this, God's Meaning seems to be, *Go, Moses, to the Children of Israel, and tell them, I am, he who is Everlasting, and cannot be other than he that promis'd to deliver his People out of Egypt, has sent me unto you, that you may not doubt the present Execution of his Promise.* But if we take the Words as they are in the Original *Hebrew*, *I will be that I will be*, without allowing one Tense to be put for the other, then the Sense may be, that GOD is so great, that he has properly no Name which can fully express who, or what he is: But let *Moses* answer his Call, and go to his Brethren, and they will see by the Miracles which shall be wrought for their Deliverance, who, and what he is, that appears for them. Wherein GOD likewise gives *Moses* an Assurance of his Eternity: For he that can say, *I will be*, in the *Future Tense*, and that in-

definitely and absolutely, is sure of existing: And of his Immutability too; for he that can say thus, *I will be*, is sure also of executing his Purposes; which could not but be a mighty Comfort to the *Israelites* in their Affliction. This is the Import of the Name **אֶהְיֶה** *Eh-jeh* in the Text; and this was the particular Occasion why GOD added it here to that of **יְהוָה** *Jehovah*, viz. that he might thereby revive the Faith of the Children of *Israel*, upon his sending *Moses* to deliver them out of *Egypt*.

The Third Name of GOD, which we meet with in Scripture, is that of **יְהִי** *Jah*, bearing likewise an Affinity both to the one and the other of the two preceding. It is certainly a proper Name of GOD, since the Royal Psalmist tells us so, *Pf. lxxviii. 4. Sing unto GOD, sing Praises to his Name: Extoll him that rideth upon the Heavens by his Name Jah, and rejoice before him.* And we find it at the End of the Expression **הַלְלוּ יְהוָה** *Hallelujah*, where-ever it is used, particularly in the Book of *Psalms*, the Spirit of GOD putting an Emphasis upon it. I will not say with some Learned Men, that this is an Abridgment of the other two; ¹ because we have that of **יְהוָה** *Jehovah* and this put together, *Is. xxvi. 4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength*; and they seem to be of an Extraction somewhat different. But since it must be own'd, that they are all derived from Verbs which are very much alike, and are of the self-same Signification, the thing is not worth the disputing here. And therefore, having explained the two former Names, I presume I need not enlarge upon this, which is of the same Import.

The Fourth Name, which is appropriated to GOD, and is attributed to him sometimes in the

¹ Gataker de Tetragramm. Joh. Buxt. F. Diss. de Dei Nom. Hebr. è contrâ.

Singular, and sometimes in the Plural Number, is that of אֵל *El*, אֱלֹהִי *Eloah*, or אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*; which answers to that of Mighty God, or Mighty Gods, in our Tongue. It is an Appellation peculiar to GOD, though it be applied to Angels and Magistrates in Holy Writ; but that is upon the Account of some Analogy they bear to him; whereas he is the Mighty of Mighties, and is possess'd of such a Sovereign Power, that all other Beings are comparatively Infirmary itself. What is most remarkable in it is, that GOD is as often styled in Scripture אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*, as אֵל *El*; though there be but One God. Nay, it is the first Name he has there, being the third Word of *Gen. i. 1.* in the Original, and the fourth in our Translation: *In the Beginning*, says *Moses*, *G O D created the Heaven and the Earth.* But why so? There is but one *Jehovah*, one Divine Essence, one God subsisting of himself; and yet it is אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*! The Reason must be, that in that one Essence there are three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; all which had a Hand in the Creation. For it was not for Elegancy's sake that the holy Pen-man named G O D אֱלֹהִים *Elohim* in the Plural Number, but out of a more substantial Design, *viz.* to denote that each Person of the Ever-blessed Trinity had a Share in that great Work; as appears in what follows. For G O D the Father is represented there as commanding every thing, G O D the Son as the Word or Commandment, and G O D the Holy Ghost as executing; for this last was the Spirit of G O D which moved upon the Face of the Waters, and hatched out the Creatures, as a Hen does its Chickens.

The Fifth Name of G O D is שַׁדַּי *Shaddai*, which signifies the Almighty; or, if you will, the All-sufficient, or him to whom Nothing is wanting; who is contented with himself, and with what he has, in the Possession of his own Happiness. A Name which suits

admirably well with GOD, and distinguishes him from all other Beings, which ever stand in need of something or other in the imperfect State they are reduced to: Whereas it is the natural Propriety of the Deity, to be always perfectly happy in itself. It is this Name, in a peculiar manner, which sets GOD forth as the Sovereign Good, who enjoys a Fulness of Felicity, and has in him a never-failing Spring of Blessings, to impart to such as serve him; and which consequently he took upon him on very gracious Grounds, to make himself known by, since it gives us so fair an Idea of him.

The Sixth and last *Hebrew* Name of GOD is *אֲדֹנָי Adonai*, which in that Tongue imports *Lords*; a Name the Holy Pen-men have appropriated to God, being written with a long *a*: But which the *Jews*, not daring to pronounce that of *Jehovah*, have substituted in its room, though it implies a very different thing; this denoting God's Eternal Essence, and the other his Sovereign Dominion. What is most observable in it is, that the Word is Plural, whereby is intimated, that though there are not more Lords than One in GOD, yet there is a Plurality in him, *viz.* that of the Three Persons; whereof the Faithful having some Knowledge under the Old Testament, they therefore called GOD *אֲדֹנָי Adonai*.

As to the *Greek* Names of GOD, which are found in the Scripture; they are those which the Seventy two Interpreters, in their Translation of the Old Testament, (which was so much esteemed by the *Jews* themselves, that in their Dispersion they both privately and publicly read it) and the Writers of the New Testament have appropriated to him. And those may be reduced to two, which answer to the *Hebrew* Names, and are used promiscuously for them by those Writers, *viz.* those of GOD, *Θεός*, and Lord, *Κύριος*. But which signifying much the same thing in that Language as they do in others, I presume I need not insist long upon

upon them here. However, they are proper Names of GOD, and were ascribed to him by the Interpreters, and the Evangelists, and Apostles, to express his Nature by. The Title of GOD denotes a Sovereign Excellency, infinitely raised above all things, according to the universal Notion Men naturally have of it; and being incommunicable to the Creature, it distinguishes him from all other Beings, according to its very Derivation. For if we will take the Opinion of approved Etymologists, it is derived from Words which signify to *contemplate*, to *run*, to *do*, and the like. And what comes near him in such Actions? It is his Propriety to enjoy an infinite Knowledge in the Contemplation of himself; to behold all his Works with one Glance of his Eyes; and to run with one Act of his Mind through the whole Creation; to do, and order all things; and in a Word, infinitely to excell any Etymology that can be made of this Name. And as to that of *Lord*, which expresses his Sovereign Dominion, nothing could be better invented or apply'd for that purpose. For what is God? It is that which being the Principle of all Beings, but which having particularly redeemed lost Man, has thereby acquired an absolute Right over all the Creatures, whereof he is the Master, by vertue of these two Claims; and consequently has a just Title to govern and dispose of them as his own Property. Such are the Proper Names of GOD, both in *Hebrew* and *Greek*, whereby his Being is in some measure made known to us; which was my Design in explaining them; and now brings me to the Consideration of the Second Thing proposed, *viz.* an Account of the Nature, or the Description of GOD, what he is.

The End of imposing Names upon things being to signify their Nature; those which GOD has given himself in Scripture, one would think, might be sufficient to acquaint us with what he is. However, after this Explication of that in the Text, and the

others I have mentioned, I presume it will not be improper, for a more particular Knowledge of him, that I enquire wherein his Essence consists, and what it is makes him GOD. Now, though GOD be all Things, because they are Beams of the Deity; and whatever does not exhibit him to us, is nothing; yet it cannot be deny'd, but there is some one or other represents him better than the rest, and which we are to conceive as his Essence. For indeed Reason tells us, that he cannot be what he is, unless there be something makes him so. But here you must not expect that I should give you a complete Definition of GOD; there is no School where that can be learnt: What Philosophy does pretend to teach us perfectly to know him, or what Theology to speak adequately of him? No Art can instruct us fully to conceive his Nature; it is an infinite Ocean, exceeding the Bounds of all Description. If then we are ask'd, what GOD is, and to define him, we must beg one Day, then two, then four, then our whole Life, as *Simonides* did upon the same Occasion; and be forced at last to answer with him, that the more we consider the thing, the more we find it difficult and impossible.

We must not however serve an unknown God, as I told you in the Beginning the unbelieving *Athenians* and the other *Heathens* did. Though we cannot fully comprehend him, yet has he given us several Adumbrations of himself in his Word and Works, whereby we may discover in some measure what he is, by his Face, by his Heart, and by other Manifestations he has made of his Nature. I shall therefore only offer you here such a Description of him, as he has been pleased to reveal to us in that manner, so far as the Weakness of Human Understanding is capable to apprehend it, and it is necessary for us to know for our Salvation. If I would cut it short, I might say with *Jesus Christ*, GOD is a Spirit; for so he defined him to the Woman of *Samaritan*
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maria, in his Discourse with her concerning his Worship, *John* iv. 24. But that which has most obtained, and is the clearest and fullest, is, that GOD is a Being subsisting of itself, in one Essence, but three Persons, *viz.* the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; Simple, Eternal, with other Attributes. This seems to me to be what makes GOD what he is, and best to express his Nature, as it has been, is, and eternally will be in him; as I shall endeavour to shew now, as to his being a Being subsisting of itself: Reserving the Consideration of the one Essence, and three Persons chiefly for the two next *Discourses*, and of some of the *Attributes*, as Occasion shall offer.

As to the First Part then of the Definition, or rather Description, that GOD is a Being subsisting of itself, wherein the Divine Nature principally consists, I have but two things to prove, to make it clearly appear; one is, that GOD subsists of himself; and the other, that in that Subsistence his Essence consists. It is no more than explaining, what it is to subsist of itself; and it will soon be seen, that in that Subsistence the Divine Essence consists: One makes out the other, with a little Application used. To subsist of itself therefore, is to subsist by its own proper Power; to sustain itself in its own Being, without needing the Assistance of another; to acknowledge no Principle of its subsisting, but its own Being; to draw its Origine from its own Essence, and no other; to be its own proper Cause; to have its Being from itself; to depend upon no other; and to be incapable any way to change it. Now such is the Subsistence of GOD, being *imply'd* in the very Notion of him. There was nothing before him, or that gave him Being: What Principle has

¹ Vide *Discourse* III. on *John* v. 7. *Discourse* IV. on *Matth.* xxviii. 19. ² *Discourse* III. on *John* v. 7. *Discourse* VI. on *Phillipp.* ii. 6. ³ *Arist. Metaph. Lib. 12. cap. 7. & alii antiqui Philosophi.*

imparted a Beginning to him? What Cause has produced him? Whence has he his Origine? What Spring does he flow from? It is by his own Power that he is and subsists; no Hand upholds him in his Existence, but his own; he is eternally the same, and changes not. If there is any such Being, it is what we call God: For he must be the first of all Beings, and depend upon no other whatsoever. He is GOD, because none gave him his Being, or can take it away from him; for if any had given it him, or could take it away from him, he would not be God, but he that could do these things. Consider all Beings apart, and you will find that every one of them must be dependent, till you come to a first; which acknowledging no Prior, must of necessity hold its Being from itself, and subsist by its own proper Power, as being its own Principle, and not being capable to have any other. Now such a Being in all these respects is what we call GOD.

By this Explication it is pretty evident, not only that GOD subsists of himself, but also that in that very Subsistence his Essence consists, preferibly to all other things: For that properly constitutes his Essence, which is the most intimate Conception we can have of him, and distinguishes him from all other Beings; or in other Words, which belongs to him first from all Eternity, *i. e.* now GOD from all Eternity subsisted of himself. Before the World was, all the Vertues which flow from his Nature, it is true, did not appear; but yet he existed: And if he had not subsisted of himself, he would not have been GOD. Why was he from all Eternity, but because he actually existed, and held his Being from himself? Whereby he is distinguish'd from all other Beings, which are dependent, and hold their Preservation from another; they are things whereof one might have said before they existed, that they were not;

because that not subsisting of themselves, they must exist but at the Will of him that makes them be; and consequently they may cease to be when he pleases. So that there is nothing that can afford us a more rational Distinction of GOD from all other Beings, and that expresses more intimately what he is, than his subsisting of himself, *i. e.* from all Eternity. It is impossible to conceive such a Being, without conceiving GOD at the same time; and it is as impossible to conceive GOD, without conceiving him an independent Being, subsisting by its own Power, and having none Prior to it. Whence it is, that amongst the several Names which are given to GOD, the Learned tell us, those of *Jehovah, Ehjeh, and Jah*, express best his Nature. The Reason is, as I have explained them, that they signify him that is, that has been, and that will be, wherein his Divine Essence consists.

And so I pass to the Consideration of the Third Thing I proposed to discourse upon, *viz.* the Being or Existence of GOD; which I shall not handle here as eternal, according to the Import of his Name in the Text, 'intending to take another Occasion for it; but in its simple Sense, as it denotes barely his Being, or that there is a God. Now to confirm this Truth, which is imply'd in the three first Names of GOD which I have explained, and to convince any Atheist that either believes or wishes the contrary; I will say in general, there is nothing more evident: Were he born as blind as the Man in the Gospel, he may find him by *feeling after him*, as the Apostle expresses it, *Acts xvii. 27.* for he is within him, and he cannot be without him. As soon as we are born, GOD stamps upon our very Souls certain Notices of him, which we can never after, or hardly blot out. The inanimate Creatures themselves seem to know that he is; for the Royal Psalmist tells us, *Pf. xix. 1.* that *the Heavens declare the Glory of GOD.* How

should then a reasonable Creature, a Creature that is capable of judging of Truth and Falshood, and whose Soul must be own'd to be a Spark and an Emanation of the Divine Nature, be ignorant of it? In this respect there are no Scepticks to doubt, whether there be a God; or Atheists, to deny his Existence, but with the Tongue; for it is impossible but the Heart must give the Lye to what the Mouth speaks of this kind.

But I observe in particular, that there are three Books especially, wherein the Characters of the Deity are so visibly written, that any Man may satisfy himself, by the Reading of them, that there is a God: And those are that of Conscience, that of Nature, and that of Revelation. Each of these Books will inform us, that the first most fundamental Truth whereof we are assured is, that there is a God; That is the Lesson they all teach us, without any Exception. Ask therefore thy Conscience, O Man, whosoever thou art, whether thou subsistest of thyself, whether something more powerful than thou has not given thee Being? Whether an Almighty Arm was not necessary to draw thee out of Nothing, to yield thee a Beginning, and to preserve thee? Whether thou canst sin without an ¹ After-Remorse? And whether thou fearest not a Tribunal, which will punish ² Vice? It will make thee form this Reasoning; If these things are so, there must be a God; if I am thus affected, it is because there is a God; if I am, there is a God: The Reality of thy Existence being the Proof of his *à posteriori*.

The Book of Nature is no less intelligible or convincing upon this Point. And therefore S. Paul had very good Reason to say, as he does, *Rom. i. 20.* That *the invisible things of GOD from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that*

¹ *Juv. Satyr. xiii.* — Quos diri conscia facti, &c.

² *Ibidem*, Est alius, &c. —

Hic putat esse Deos. —

are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead : Whereby he concludes the *Gentiles* to be without Excuse in their not duly glorifying GOD. Nature has two principal Ways whereby it leads us into the Knowledge of the Existence of GOD ; one is by its Creation, and the other by its Conservation. ' It is the universal Voice of the Creatures, that they had a Creator, that they had a Beginning , that they do not subsist of themselves , and that they are dependent Beings in their Life, Motion, and Existence. And indeed , since they could not give themselves what they have , they must have had it from some other, and that other from another, till we come to a first Principle ; and the first Principle is what we call GOD, who holds his Being from no other, but subsists of himself. Moreover, seeing all things have been created, none being able to create themselves, they must have been created by some one who had the Power to create them. Now to bring a thing, nay, a whole World, out of Nothing, there must be an infinite Power, and that is what we term GOD. And lastly, if all things were created, their Creator must have been before them ; otherwise, if he had begun to be but at the same Moment he created them, he must have held his Existence from some other ; and so we shall be to enquire from whom that other had his, and thus *ad infinitum*. But now he that is the first of all things, and was before the Creation of all the rest, is what we name GOD. These Arguments , I hope , are conclusive to all that believe the Creation of the World : But if there are any now that do not, but think it to have been eternal, I referr them to other of these ² *Discourses*, for a Confutation of that Absurdity.

¹ *Aut. Lib. de Mundo, Vetus fama est, &c. passim. Gal. Lib. iii. de usu Part. Compono hic profectò canticum, &c.*

² *Discourse IV. on Matth. xxviii. 19. Discourse VI. on Philipp. ii. 6.*

The Conservation of Nature, or the Divine Providence which is visible to every one, affords us the same Light ; for it is a continued Creation, and no less a Power is necessary to preserve this World than was at first to create it ; none but the All-powerful Arm of GOD being able to hinder a created Being from falling into nothing again. If there were no GOD to uphold thee, thou wretched Worm of the Earth, thou wouldst infallibly sink down and fade away into something less than Smoke : But *when I consider the Heavens, the Work of GOD's Fingers*, as the Psalmist elegantly expresses it ; *the Moon and the Stars which he has ordain'd* ; that wonderful Order wherein all Things are so wisely disposed and governed ; those Vicissitudes and Seasons which so regularly succeed one another ; I perceive in all these things such a Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, for the Preservation of the Whole, as fully demonstrates the Existence of its ¹ Author. ² There is no Man who applies himself to the Contemplation of the Works of Nature and Providence, but will be forced to cry out with Admiration in the Knowledge, or rather Confidence, that there is a GOD ; *O Lord our God, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth !*

The third and last Book, wherein the Existence of GOD is plainly legible, is that of Revelation, which we commonly call the Scripture. There it is, that we read not only that there is a GOD, but where we may also discern the lively Lineaments of the true One, more than in any thing else besides. Its whole Contents are nothing scarce, but a System

¹ Cic. Lib. 2. de Nat. Deor. Nam cum cæteras animantes, &c. Ovid. Lib. 1. Metam. Pronaque cum spectent, &c. ² Plato Lib. 5. de Leg. Firmam esse & immutabilem Providentiæ sanctionem asserit. Lucilius apud Cic. Lib. 2. de Nat. Deor. copiose tractat Providentiam. Sen. Lib. 2. Nat. Quest. cap. 45. Vis Deum Providentiam dicare ! &c. & alii ex Antiquis of

of Divinity, *i. e.* a Discourse, an Argument, a Demonstration of GOD; a Treatise wherein is set forth what could not be known at all, or not so easily, concerning him, by Conscience or Nature; as the Unity of his Essence, the Trinity of his Persons, the Distinction of his Operations, and the like; so that we cannot cast our Eyes upon those Sacred Volumes, but we shall soon be convinced, with the Assistance of his Spirit, that there is a GOD, one Divine Essence, three Consubstantial Persons, *viz.* the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, distinguish'd, *ad extra*, by their peculiar Characters of Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of the World, and the like. Whence it follows in particular, that by the Light of Conscience, Nature, or Revelation, and even by each of these three Ways, all Men may be satisfied that there is a GOD, and that none ought to doubt it: Which was to be explain'd and proved here.

What remains here, but that we acknowledge, and at the same time admire the peculiar Goodness and Grace of GOD to us, in calling us to the Knowledge of himself, and of his holy Word? We were formerly, if not Atheists, having the Advantage of the same common Notions with the rest of Mankind, yet at least *Gentiles*, as all the other Nations of the Earth, except the *Jews*, *i. e.* as *S. Paul* characterizes them, *Ephes. ii. 12. without GOD in the World*; having wrong Apprehensions of him, and consequently unduly serving him. But now GOD has been graciously pleas'd, by giving us also his lively Oracles, to manifest himself clearly to us, as far as we are capable of it on this side the Grave; and that by his most expressive Lineaments, the very Names he has appropriated to himself, to declare his Nature and Being by: And indeed, a Man must be fallen into the lowest Degree of Stupidity, not to be sensible that these Names give us some Knowledge of the true GOD, and lay
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accordingly some Obligation upon us. What! do we not discern yet that he is the everlasting, eternal in his Essence, and immutable in his Purposes? Can any one point at his Beginning, or shew when he fail'd in his Word; or presume that he will alter any way? Was he not at the Birth of the World, to protect his Church in its Infancy? Was he not with it in the Ark upon the Floods, to keep the Waters from overflowing it? And did he not rescue it out of Bondage, when its Enemies thought to make it sink under the Burden? Did he not attend it in its Manhood, to repel the Assaults of its Persecutors? Is he not with it at this time, to succour it in its old Age? And will he not crown it with Immortality Above with himself, when he removes it hence? Doubt we yet, whether he is the Almighty, who created the Universe, and whose Power nothing can withstand? the All-sufficient, who stands in need of nothing, but without whom all is in Misery? and the Lord of the whole World, to whom *every Knee must bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things on Earth, and Things under the Earth?* All these things are signified by his Names. But since he has given us thus to know him, his Essence and Existence, ought we not to serve him with all the Humility this requires of us? Consider we what GOD is, and what we ourselves are; and it will scarce be possible for us not to keep within the Bounds of our Duty, or to fail in the Worship we owe him. If he be the great *Jehovah*, or the other two Names he has taken to himself, bearing an Affinity with it, let us adore his Eternal Majesty, before which the Angels tremble, and the Cherubins cover their Faces with their Wings. If he be *El* or *Elohim*, let us dread his Power: If he be *Shaddai*, let us seek what is necessary for us in him, and be persuaded that we can never be happy, or enjoy any thing but in his Communion: And if he be the Lord, let us sub-

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mitt to his Scepter: And since his Love to his Church has been such, that he has promis'd he will be with it to the end of the World, let us expect with Perseverance the Fulfilling of his Word, and by no means be in doubt that he will be our GOD; and that after we have known him in part upon Earth, he will fully discover to us his Glory in Heaven: Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant!



E

D I S.



DISCOURSE III.

The Trinity in Unity.

I JOHN, v. 7.

*There are Three that bear Record in Heaven,
the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;
and these Three are One.*



IT can hardly be deny'd, but Man, by the Light of his Reason, may attain to some Knowledge of God, of his Existence, and even Unity, and infinite Perfections. There is scarce any one who will consult himself with a little Attention, and without abusing that Lamp which God has set up in his Soul, but may easily perceive that there is a God, and that he is Almighty, All-wise, All-good; and in a Word, endowed with all Excellencies in the highest Degree. But it must be confess'd at the same time, that Sin has rais'd a thick and dark Cloud betwixt him and Mankind, and so blinded the Eyes of their Understanding, that they have rather haply felt after him, as the Apostle expresses it, *Acts xvii. 27.*

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than truly found him: Whereof we have a more convincing Proof, than it were to be wish'd, in those monstrous Errors which the Heathens formerly fell into concerning the Deity. But without any Regard had to this, it is plainly evident, that Men, by the Strength of their Natural Reason, cannot discover wherein the Divine Essence precisely consists; and what is most essential in it, its subsisting in Three Persons. And to make out this, I will lay down here, that we may naturally consider God three Ways; 1. In his Productions, or Works; 2. By removing from him all the Imperfections which are found in the Creatures; 3. By ascribing to him all the Perfections which are observable in the same. Now none of these three Ways can we raise ourselves to the Knowledge of his Essence; and what is most essential in it, its subsisting in Three Divine Persons.

For, I. If we consider God in his Works, viz. in the Creatures, it is plain that they cannot represent to us his Essence, or what is essential to him, because they are not of the same Nature with him. A Son indeed may represent the Essence of his Father, because they are both of the same Nature; but a House, *ex. gr.* cannot that of the Architect who has built it. Even so this great Fabrick of the World, as magnificent as it is, cannot represent to us the Essence of him that has made it, viz. God.

II. When we consider God, by removing from him all the Imperfections which are seen in the Creatures; *ex. gr.* when we conceive that he cannot die, that he cannot suffer any Harm, that he cannot sin; we rather apprehend what he is not, than what he is: And therefore we usually express ourselves in such Cases in Negative, not Affirmative Terms; though they do not signify a bare Negation, and imply something Positive. Thus, Immortal, Impas-

fible, Impeccable, denote Positive Qualities in the Divine Nature.

III. When we consider God, by ascribing to him all the Perfections which we observe in the same Creatures, in a Sovereign Degree, *ex. gr.* Life, Power, Wisdom, Glory; in short, all that we meet with, and think most excellent in the visible World: We conceive indeed, that he is Living, Powerful, Wise, Glorious, &c. but we do not apprehend what is the Nature of these Excellencies in him. The Life, the Power, the Wisdom, and the Glory of God, are as different from the Life, the Power, the Wisdom, and the Glory of Man, as the Heaven is from the Earth, or rather, as the Creator is from the Creature; what is Infinite, from what is Finite. It is true, that these things bear the same Names in respect of God and Man; but that proceeds from the Deficiency of Human Language: Their Essence is so unlike, that a learned Father wish'd formerly, (I think it was *S. Augustin*) that all the Languages were reform'd in this Particular, and that we used no more to signify those Shadows of Perfection which are found in Man, the same Terms which are employ'd to denote the Perfections of God. But we do not want this Expedient, God having described and distinguish'd himself in the Language of Scripture, as to what is most essential to him, so far as we are able to understand it, and it is necessary for our Salvation; particularly in the Text before us, where the beloved Apostle tells us, that *there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One*; which I propose to be the Subject of this present Meditation.

These Words being generally understood to contain the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, supposing the *Word* to signify the *Son*, which I shall have Occasion to explain in another *Discourse*,

whither I referr the Reader ; I shall prosecute them in this Method, changing a little the Order of them, viz. 1. I shall shew, That there is but one Essence in the Deity, or that God is One ; *These Three are One* : And, 2. That there are in this one Essence, or the Godhead, three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.*

As to the first Head, the Unity of the Divine Essence, or that there is but one God ; having intimated that it is discoverible by the Light of Reason, I shall begin my Proof by that. The thing speaks of itself, tho' the generality of the Heathens were ignorant of it. For since God is a Being subsisting of itself, as it is deducible from the very Principles of Nature, there cannot be many such, nay indeed not two ; there is but one that can have an independent Essence ; otherwise there would be two Firsts, which implies a Contradiction. I ask therefore, if there were two Beings subsisting of themselves, would one hold its Subsistence from the other, or would they both subsist by their own proper Power ? Neither of these two can be said here ; for if one holds its Subsistence from the other, that which is dependent cannot be God, because it does not subsist of itself ; and if both subsist by their own proper Power, they must be both but one Being, because they are the same thing in that respect ; and they cannot be two, since there is nothing that distinguishes them ; for to be two, one must be something which the other is not. By which Argument we prove likewise, that the Essence of God consists in its subsisting of itself, because it yields us the Idea of the Unity of God, and shews us that he is but One.

And indeed it is the Doctrine of right Reason, and the Voice of uncorrupt Nature, which

teaches us that there is a first, sovereign, eternal, infinite, and most perfect Being, with other Attributes, which are included in the very Notion of God; but he cannot be such, unless he be one only. It is a Contradiction, according to the common Sense of Mankind, to say that there are many Firsts, many Sovereigns, many Most Perfects, and the like. For either they would be equal, and so neither would be the First, the Sovereign, the Most Perfect, &c. or they would be unequal; and so the Inferior would not be God. And therefore the Heathens, at least the judicious Heads amongst them, seeing the Necessity of the Inference, acknowledged the Unity of the Godhead, and ascribed the Government of the World to one supreme God, whom they called the Father of Gods and Men. ¹ *Socrates* is said to have died for this Doctrine; but it was certainly own'd by *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Epictetus*, *Cicero*, *Seneca*, and other Philosophers. But this seems to be best made out by the Attribute of Simplicity, whereby God is the most pure, unmix'd, and the most One Essence, if I may so speak, that can be imagined. Which being in effect the first Perfection of his Nature, and coming first to hand in the Description I have given of him, I shall take this Occasion to explain here, as yielding a great Light in the Matter we are upon.

There is then a Physical Simplicity improperly so termed, and comparatively with other things more compounded, as, *ex. gr.* when we vulgarly call Herbs Simple, by Comparison with the Compositions wherein go several other Ingredients. The Extracts of Herbs are likewise Simple, if we compare them with the Bodies from which they are drawn, which are more compounded. Again, the Heaven and the Elements are more simple than the mix'd Bodies, since these are resolved into them.

1 Tertull. *Apolog.* p. 14. & alii.

Lastly, the Soul of Man, and the Angels, being Spirits, are Beings simple, compared with material Things, as subtle as they can be. It is not after this Manner yet, that God's Essence is said to be simple; this is only premised, to prevent a wrong Apprehension of the Deity in the Minds of the meaner Capacities, from the Ambiguity of the Word, even in the Writings of Philosophers. There is no Creature, however simple it may be thought to be, but is compounded; there is always some Mixture in it: Nothing is pure and unmix'd, comparatively to him; he alone is absolutely simple.

What is therefore the Simplicity of God? It is the Propriety of his Nature, which makes him to be so much One, that we cannot conceive two different things in him, and which excludes all kind of Composition from him, and even all Possibility of it. By it he is always what he is, without any Augmentation or Diminution of his Essence; as being a pure indivisible Act, to which nothing can be added, or taken from, without destroying it. It should be enough, one would think, to prove this Simplicity of God, to alledge his Name, or to shew that his Essence consists in being, or subsists by its own proper Power. For if there were any the least Composition in him, he could not be called God, his Essence could not consist in being, or subsist by its own proper Power; but there would be two Essences in him, or otherwise a double Being. If we conceive only two, though the most subtle things in God, he will presently cease to be absolutely One. And then his Essence may be divided; What do I say? It may not subsist of itself; and there must be a third to make them subsist, and unite them together, and raise a Being out of them. Now if that can be in this Case, God is no more one God, is no more God, nor a single Essence, nor a Being subsisting of itself.

But to proceed particularly: Let us see whether there be any Composition that may be applied to

God's Essence, amongst those that have any Pre-
 tence to it; for there are several kinds of them,
 which it would be needless to examine. Can it be
 then, ^{1st}, that which consists in a Collection of several
 material Parts? That would indeed effectually de-
 stroy the Simplicity of the Godhead. For this makes
 God a Body, with a Witness. And truly thither seem
 to have driven those Hereticks, who were ancient-
 ly called *Anthropomorphites*; because they cloathed
 God with the outward Form of a Man, ¹ and ascribed
 to him all its Parts, as Eyes, Hands, Feet, &c. With
 which Heresy *Tertullian* himself was thought, or at
 least reported formerly by his Enemies, to be taint-
 ed: But ² *S. Augustin* clears him of that Imputation,
 in the Catalogues he has drawn of Hereticks, *viz.* in
 that of the *Tertullianists*, and elsewhere. I may men-
 tion however the *Sadducees*, if we take the Text li-
 terally, and the *Hobbiſts*, in this Class, who denying
 the Existence of Angels, and Spirits, and immaterial
 Beings, must believe that God is a Body: Wherein
 they probably followed the extravagant Opinion of
 some ancient Philosophers, amongst whom one gave
 him a Body of Air, another of Heavenly Matter, and
 another a Human one. A most gross and impious
 Error; which more than any other strikes at the
 Divine Nature, and tends to destroy it; being full
 of Indignities and Contradictions! For if God be a
 Body, he must either be in one Determinate Place, or
 every where; if in one Determinate Place, then he
 must be a finite, and an imperfect Being; but if eve-
 ry where, besides that that Body must be monstrous,
 it must likewise penetrate all other Bodies, and so
 be a Body in another Body; which is all a downright
 Impossibility. If God is composed of several mate-
 rial Parts, who has thus gathered them together,

¹ Warren's *Vital Trinity*.

² August. de Gen. ad Lit. Lib. x. p. 654, 655.

and framed them into one Body? If they separate, what will they be, and what will become of their God? And if each of them is not God, will not there be something in God which cannot be called God, but is only Part of him?

There is a second Sort of Composition, which destroys likewise the Simplicity of a Being, and that is that of the Substance with the Accident, or, *vice versa*, the contrary. *Ex. gr.* a Stone is not a simple Being, because with the Substance of it there are several Accidents joined, as Extension, Figure, and the like. In like manner, the Soul of Man, and the Angels, are not simple Beings; because, besides their spiritual Substance, there are in these Spirits certain Habits, both acquired and infused, which are distinguish'd from their Subject. But neither is this Composition to be found in God; all is Substance in him, no Accident. For if there were any Accident in him, there would be something in him which is dependent; the Existence of the Accident depending upon the Subject where it is: Now all that is in God is independent. Again, the Accident being a thing less noble than the Substance, there would be something in God not of the highest Perfection, which is unworthy of the Deity, wherein every thing is absolutely perfect. And lastly, it is repugnant to the Nature of God, who is and subsists not in another, but of himself, which the Accident cannot do.

There are moreover two other Sorts of Composition in created Beings, which make them not be simple; and those are the Conjunction of the Essence with the Existence, and that of the Essence with the Subsistence in the same Being; which because they bear a great Affinity to one another, I will explain under one. To this end, I will use the two common Instances of the *Rose*, and *Humanity*, to illustrate this Matter by. A Rose, though it does not exist in the Winter, has however its Essence in the Bush, otherwise it would be produced out of nothing. But when
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the Summer comes, it is visible there is something added to it: It is blown, and it is somewhat more by its Existence than it was before. And therefore it is a compounded Being, made up of its Essence, and Existence. The Reason is, that being blown, it has something more than it had before; there is an Addition made to its Essence. As to the other Instance, all Men have the same Nature, which we commonly call Humanity, being a real thing, the Essence which makes them all alike, and Brethren. And yet it is certain, there is some Addition made to it, as it subsists in *Peter* and *Paul*, the Human Nature being not the same in all respects in both; otherwise *Peter* would be *Paul*, and *Paul* *Peter*. There must be then some Composition in them, to make them different Beings: And that is the Subsistence of the Humanity in these two Persons, which become different the one from the other, by the Addition it makes to the Human Nature in them. Hereby *Peter*, and likewise *Paul*, is a compounded Being, because it is made up of the Human Nature, and its Subsistence in him; which being two different things, make him not be a simple Being. But neither is this kind of Composition to be met with in God: His Essence, his Existence, or his Subsistence, are but one and the same thing, and add nothing to his Nature: His Existence adds nothing to his Essence, for it always existed; and the Subsistence of the three Divine Persons, which distinguishes the one from the other, is not really distinct from the Divine Essence, as one thing is from another; otherwise one Person having in its Subsistence a Being which the others have not, something would be wanting to each of them, viz. the Being which the different Subsistence gives the others. Herein then consists the Simplicity of God; viz. in that he is such a pure Act, that he cannot suffer two things in him.

Notwithstanding all this, there is a great Difficulty here to be removed. For there being three
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Divine Persons in the Godhead, which are so distinguished, that the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Ghost; and *è contra*: It seems to follow, that God is a compounded Being. To which I answer, that might be true indeed, if the Subsistence of each Person were a real Being in itself, and not a substantial Mode; because if that were so, there would be in one Person a Being, which is not in the other. But this Subsistence is real only in its Foundation; *i. e.* it is God the Father makes his Subsistence real, God the Son his likewise, and so God the Holy Ghost his. Now the Subsistence of the Father is not another thing from his Essence, nor a different Essence from that of the Son, or that of the Holy Ghost; and *è contra*. The Subsistence therefore does not add a new Being to each Person, and consequently it does not cause a Composition in them, or the Divine Essence; it only distinguishes them. The Effect of the Divine Personalities is to discriminate the Persons, not to give them new Beings different from the Deity. But it must be observed, that tho' these Personalities are not real Beings distinct from the Divine Essence, and are incommunicable from one Person to the other; yet they are not meer Non-Entities, but something Positive, *i. e.* a Mode of subsisting.

Having thus proved by Reason, and confirmed the Unity of the Godhead by explaining its Simplicity; I presume I need not enlarge much upon the Authorities of Revelation, which is the other way of proceeding in this Matter: These are so full and express, that I think a few of them will be sufficient. Thus then speaks the Scripture of the Unity, or rather God of himself by it; *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*; Deut. vi. 4. *Thou shalt have none other Gods before me*, in the Decalogue; *I will not give my Glory to another*, Is. xlii. 8. Which makes him say again to the Israelites, Deut. xxxii. 39. *See now, that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me.* Which

Which is confirmed by our Saviour in his Gospel, where he tells the Scribe, who ask'd him the Question, that the first of all the Commandments is, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*, Mark xii. 29. To us, says S. Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 6. *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things, and we in him.* What he repeats often in his Epistles, that *there is but one God*, as a receiv'd Principle that wanted no Proof; but ought to be taken for granted by all Christians.

God therefore being one only, as it appears by these several Reasons and Texts, besides that we have in hand; we may now see what we are to think of the Polytheism of the Heathens, and of the new-fangled Notions of some Christians, who having affirm'd three Substances, or three Minds in the Deity, have thereby laid a fair Foundation for Tritheism; than which, nothing can be more destructive of the Divine Essence. But this latter Point having been sufficiently confuted and exposed, ¹ by two of the most eminent Pens of the University of *Oxford*, I shall not presume to interfere here with their very judicious and learned Performances; I will only add, that a certain Author laying it down, ² That God the Father, and the Son of God, are Beings numerically distinct from each other, I do not see how I can excuse him from Dytheism. As to the former Point, the Polytheism of the Heathens, I must needs say, they seem to me to have acted more rationally, by establishing one supreme God, and their other Gods as inferior to him, than those of the other Communion, who pay a Divine Worship to the Angels and Saints; and yet dare not own them to be so much

¹ *Dr. South's Animadver. on Dr. Sherlock of the Trinity.*
Dr. Edwards's (late Princ. of Jesus Coll. Oxon.) Defence of the
Oxon Decree, against Dr. Sherlock.

² *Whiston's Prim. Christ. Rev. Vol. IV. Art. 22. p. 377.*

as inferior Deities. But let this be as it will, that Distinction of the Heathens, of a supreme and inferior Gods, can never justify their Plurality of Divinities, and the Adoration they paid them: For to what has been said already concerning the Unity of the Godhead, let me add one Argument more, to take off this pretended Difference, and I have done with this first Head of Discourse. A supreme and inferior Gods is a Contradiction in the Adjunct, as they speak in the Schools, because they cannot both be Gods; and what Agreement could there be between them, if thus they should be many? For either the Power of the one would be subordinate and limited, and Bounds set to his Dominion; or else they would sit both together upon the same Throne, judging and governing all things with an equal Authority. The Power of the one cannot be limited; for then he could not be Almighty, there being things over which his Hands did not extend, which is unworthy of Beings call'd Gods. They cannot govern with an equal Authority; for each of them having a Will, it might happen that the one would be for this thing, and the other for that; and if they should thus disagree, who should set them at Agreement together, there being no others supposed to be Superior to them?

From all which, I hope, it is pretty evident, that there is but one Essence in the Deity, or that God is one, not many; *these three are one*, which was the first thing proposed to be enquired into. I am therefore now to shew, 2. That there is in this one Essence, or the Godhead, three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*. This is the Mystery reveal'd by the Gospel, but which is not without its Difficulties: There is but one Essence in God, it is discoverable even by the Light of Reason; but there must be three Divine Persons in the Godhead, the

Text

Text says it; a genuine Part of the Scripture,
 notwithstanding the vain Attempts of the *Arians*
 to expunge it; and the Catholick Church, which is
 the Pillar and Ground of the Truth, has declared
 and confirmed it in its most solemn Assemblies.
 But how can such a thing be? three Divine Persons,
 and but one God; one Essence in three Hypostases,
 an Unity in Trinity, and a Trinity in Unity!
 What! there is one Father, one Son, and one
 Holy Ghost; each of these Persons is distinguish-
 ed from the others, each of them is God; and
 yet there shall not be three Gods! The Father can-
 not be the Son, the Son cannot be the Holy Ghost,
 and the Holy Ghost cannot be the Father, or the
 Son; and yet they must be one and the same God!
 O the Height, and Depth! this is the Mystery of
 Mysteries; the Mystery whereof so many Men were
 never able to understand the Truth, and whereon
 they have made Shipwreck of their Faith; which has
 turn'd the Wisdom of the Wise into Foolishness!
 The Mystery which has been the innocent Occasion
 of so many Hereticks and Heresies! The Mystery
 which has given a Handle to some to think, that
 the Son and the Holy Ghost were not either of
 them God, properly so call'd; as all the *Unitarians*
 do: To others, to confound the Persons with the
 Essence, as the *Sabellians*; and to say, that the three
 Persons were not distinguish'd in themselves, but
 were only ⁴ Nominal, or OEconomical Manifestati-
 ons; whereby God appear'd sometimes as the Father,
 sometimes as the Son, and sometimes as the Holy
 Ghost, as Occasion required; to shew his Wisdom,

¹ *Monsieur Martin's Tract concerning it.* Hamm. New
 Test. Annot. in locum. Mills's Test. in locum. ² Whiston's
 Prim. Christ. Rev. Vol. IV. p. 379. to p. 383. ³ Clendon's
Tract de Personâ, pag. 166, to 170. Idem, pag. 170, 171.
 Idem, pag. 92. Whiston's Hist. Pref. Suppl. p. 65. Idem,
 Vol. IV. p. 361. to 373. & passim. ⁴ Clendon's *Tract de*
Personâ, pag. 185. &c.

and observe an Order: To others, to divide the Divine Nature into three unequal or equal Spirits, essentially distinguish'd, as the *Tritheists*; whereby the first Person enjoys one Part, and each of the other two its Portion; so that the Essence of the Son is not the same with that of the Father, nor that of the Holy Ghost with that of the Son.

I must confess, the Mystery of the Unity of the Godhead in the Trinity of Persons, and of the three Divine Persons in one Essence, is incomprehensible: Here it is Reason must submit to Faith; nothing but Scripture can direct us in it; and therefore, without disputing about the thing, we must acquiesce in what is written. If we proceed otherwise, we shall be in Danger of falling into Error, into *Unitarianism*, *Arianism*, *Sabellianism*, *Eunomianism*, *Socinianism*, and the Heresies of other self-conceited Men; who by reviving old Heterodoxies, or broaching new Expositions, have corrupted the Purity of the Christian Religion, dishonour'd the Catholick Church, and disturb'd the Peace of that Part of it whereof they pretended to be Members; defecrating, by their Prophaneness, the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. To keep you from wandering in so intricate a Labyrinth, give me leave to offer to you here one Advice; and that is, to hold fast to that famous Symbol, commonly call'd *S. Athanasius's* Creed, as it is receiv'd in this Church, which is an Epitome of the Doctrine of the four General Councils concerning the Trinity, and a true Exposition of the Christian Faith; a Piece which has been thought so necessary to maintain the Truth against Error, that it has been made a Part of the Divine Service, to the end that it might be rehears'd upon Solemn Occasions, and the Congregation should be thereby instructed in what they were to believe concerning those Points. For it does not only contain the Sense of a most excellent Father upon that

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Matter, notwithstanding the base Calumnies of the Writer before quoted, but also the Declaration of the Catholick Church, grounded upon Scripture,² for all his reproachful Treatment of it; and that not simply as to the Things, but the very Expressions, which are all found there either expressly, or by evident Consequence, as we shall see by and by. Now it is most certain, Scripture must be our Guide herein; we ought to follow it preferibly to every thing else, and to take great heed that we go not beyond or aside of it: If we are not very circumspect, we run a Hazard of being strangely misled; because, without this Light, nothing can be rightly apprehended concerning the Blessed Trinity.

Two things then are to be supposed, and taken here for granted; 1. That the Mystery of the Trinity cannot be discover'd by the Guidance of Nature: Turn over its Book as much as you please, you will never read it there; it is a Doctrine above the natural Reach of Men and Angels too; you may perhaps see some Characters of the Godhead in the Creation of the World, but you can never discern one God in three Persons, without the Help of Revelation. 2. That this Mystery is manifested in the Word of God, so far as it is necessary for us to know it, and that there it is only to be sought for, and to be found; nothing else being able to shew us a Divine Trinity in one Deity. Now I observe, that in treating of it amongst the Learned, these two Points are laid down in general as undeniable; 1. That in one and the same Divine Essence, there are three distinct Persons. 2. That these three Persons are call'd the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are but one and the same God; and indeed therein seems to consist the whole My-

¹ Whiston's Hist. Pref. Susp. concerning Ath. p. 116. to 128. & passim. Vide Mr. Thirlby's Answer. ² Whiston's Prim. Christ. Rev. Vol. IV. App. Observ. p. 14. to 26.

stery of the Trinity. So that if we look upon the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as three Persons, whereof each is God, and notwithstanding make but one and the same Deity, which they possess equally, though they be three distinct *Supposita*; we shall have the Idea we ought to have of the glorious Trinity: The Matter is difficult, but conquerible by the Light of God's holy Word.

The Question therefore is not whether there is such a Mystery fully revealed to us? whether we can apprehend how one is three, and three is one, as we are taught they are in the Godhead? it is agreed on all hands, that this is above the Capacity of Human Understanding; and that to reason about the Manner of it, is to go about to lose one's self in a Maze. But whether it is Matter of Fact, and there is such a thing manifested to us? or particularly, whether the Scripture speaks of the two Propositions which I have laid down, to the Effect I say, *viz.* that in one and the same Divine Essence there are three distinct Persons, and that these three Persons, whereof each is God, and which yet are but one God, are call'd, one the Father, the other the Son, and the other the Holy Ghost? For this is, as I have already intimated, the Substance of the Mystery of the Trinity; so that if the Scripture speaks to that purpose, we have found out the Truth; but on the contrary, if not, if it makes any Addition, Diminution, or Alteration in the Sense of those two Propositions, we have Ground to suspect ourselves to be in Error.

This is the Touch-stone, and at the same time a Stone of stumbling, against which all have hit who have thought amiss of the Glorious Trinity. Let us then search into the Bottom, and see whether it be true that the Scripture says, that in the one Divine Essence there subsist three distinct Persons, whereof each is God, which notwithstanding are not three Gods; and whereof the first is call'd the

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Father,

Father, the second the Son, and the third the Holy Ghost? The Hereticks are alarm'd when they hear us mention the Terms of *Essence* or *Substance*, *Hypostasis* or *Person*, *Trinity*, and the like in the Deity; such Words, say they, are invented, and no-where to be met with in Scripture. It is false, quoth they, and it is in vain you alledge it, that there is in God one *Essence*, and three distinct Persons; the Word of God tells you no such thing, and they are Names purposely contrived to make us think amiss of the Godhead, or rather to disguise your evil Thoughts of it with. If it were necessary, it would be an easy Matter to prove the Truth of these Expressions in the Fathers and the Councils, and to shew them the Use of them there, when they assert and explain the Mystery of the Trinity: And for this Purpose it would be but citing ¹ *Justin Martyr*, ² *Origen*, and ³ others, who flourish'd in the first Ages of Christianity, or the four General Councils; in all whose Writings these Terms are frequent, and to whose Authority we owe a great Deference. But since their Testimonies would be worth little in this Matter, if they were not grounded in Scripture, I am willing to seek the Words in that pure Fountain; and I affirm, that they are there either expressly or implicitly; as likewise the Terms *Consubstantial*, *Coequal*, and others, which are used in this Controversy; and if they were not so, provided the Mysteries they signify were there in effect, I cannot think but any reasonable Man would be satisfy'd.

⁴ As to the Word *Essence*, I must confess, it is not to be found in Scripture written with just so many

¹ Just. Mart. Arist. Dogm. Everf. p. 111. B. & alii, for the Word *Essence*.

² Orig. hic & illic, for the Word *Hypostasis*, though not clearly distinguish'd from that of Οὐσία & alii.

³ Tatian. Lib. 2. Theoph. ad Autolyc. Lib. 2. p. 94. for the Word *Trinity*.

⁴ Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 10. Quest. 4.

Letters ; but what is the Import of the Name *Jehovah* in *Hebrew* throughout the Old Testament, and of *ὁ αὐτός* in *Greek*, Rev. i. 4, 8. if it be not Essence in the Concrete? I would be glad they would explain to me what *S. Paul* means by *θεότης*, *Coloss.* ii. 9. or *S. Peter*, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. by *θεῶν οὐσίας*, unless it be the Divine Essence in the Abstract. As to that of *Hypostasis* in *Greek*, and *Person* in *Latin*, which we may use promiscuously, as they denote a *Suppositum*, or *Subsistence*, not Substance, it cannot be deny'd to be there expressly; since we have it, *Heb.* i. 3. where the Son is styled *ἡ εἰκὼν τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*; the express Image of his (Father's) Person. And as to that of *Trinity*, it is true, that very Term is nowhere to be found there; but since no more is intended by it, than to signify that there are three Persons in the Deity; if the Scriptures say so, must we not necessarily infer thence that there is a *Trinity*, seeing it is but another Expression to the same Purpose for three Persons? As to those of *Consubstantial*, *Coequal*, and the like; if the same Scripture declares that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are each of them God, of the same Essence and Perfections, without any Limitation, where is the Harm in expressing it thus, notwithstanding the Cavils of our Adversaries to the contrary? But I must not forget to declare here before I go farther, that the *Anti-Trinitarians* may have no Occasion to wrangle about the Origine and Use of the Word *Person* amongst the *Romans*, in the time that their Language is supposed to have been in its greatest Purity; that I take it in the Sense of the Schools, or rather of the Church, as it is understood by its most eminent Fathers and approved Councils, viz. for an *Individuum* or *Suppositum*, Intellectual, Complete, Undivided in itself, and In-

* Clendon's *Tract.* de Personâ, p. 12. 10 20. Idem, p. 93, 94. & passim.

communicable to any other. Thus each Man and each Angel is a Person, because they have the Conditions required to make them so; but with this Difference, as to the Divine Persons, that those are divided from one another; these only distinguish'd. It is an *Individuum*, because no general Notion is a Person; it is Intellectual, because no Being without Life and Reason is a Person; it is Complete, because not intended to be united with another, as the Soul of a Man, and the Humanity of Christ, which are therefore no Persons; it is Undivided in itself, because it cannot be divided into Parts; and it is Incommunicable, because its Personality cannot be communicated. These Terms being thus proved to be found in Scripture, and that of *Person* explained according to the Sense of the Church, I must now proceed to do the same as to the Thing itself; but having done it already as to the Unity of the Godhead, it remains only here that I shew in general, that in this one Essence there are three Divine Persons, viz. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*, which was the second Thing proposed to be spoken to, reserving the particular Consideration of it for the next *Discourse*.

I will not tire the Reader, or myself, with a tedious Account of all the Passages of Scripture which may be produced to set forth this great Truth; but besides those that occur in the Series of these *Discourses*, I shall only quote some few of the most convincing; and to do Justice first to the Text, 'what can be more plain, not only to express the Unity of the Godhead, for it is not as in the Verse following, *These three agree εἰς τὸ ἓν, in one*, which might admitt of some Dispute; but τὸ ἓν, *they are one*: What can be

* Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 10. Quest. 1. Id. Prim. Christ. Rev. Vol. IV. p. 48. 10 53.

more plain, I say, but also to denote the Trinity of Persons, than that there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all specify'd by their distinguishing Titles? But God took Care to acquaint his Church early with it; for besides other Passages, in the History of the Creation, we have one which concerns us nearly, and shews us at least a Plurality of Persons; *Let us make Man in our Image*, Gen. i. 26. Whom was this spoken to? it was not certainly to the Angels, who do not appear to have had a Hand in any Part of that Work, and in whose Image we were not created; but of God, and in his Likeness; and it could not be to Man, who was not yet made. And these Persons, not essentially but personally, we find distinguish'd in several Texts even of the Old Testament, particularly *Psal. xlv. 7. God, thy God hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy Fellows*. But in the Account of the Deliverance of the Children of Israel out of the Egyptian Bondage, wherein the Finger of God is legible in every Part, we meet with a distinct Mention of the Trinity; the first Person whereof, viz. the Father, the Adversaries allow; and so may they the second, viz. the Son, to whom that Work is likewise ascribed, *Exod. iii. 2. under the Style of the Angel of the Lord, i. e. his uncreated Angel*, as appears from his Description and Divine Attributes throughout that glorious Transaction: As also the third, viz. the Holy Ghost, who had in like manner his Share in it, as a Divine Person. All which is summ'd up, and nobly set forth by Jesus Christ in his Recital of God's Mercies to the Jewish Church, *Is. lxiii. 7, 8, 9, 10. I will mention the loving Kindnesses of the Lord, and the Praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great Goodness towards the House of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his Mercies, and according to the Multitude of his loving Kindnesses. For he said, Surely they are my People,*

that will not lye ; so he was their Saviour. In all their Affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them ; in his Love and in his Pity he redeemed them ; and he bare them, and carried them all the Days of Old. But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit ; therefore he was turned to be their Enemy, and he fought against them. Where we have a particular Mention made of three Persons, viz. the Lord, the Angel of his Presence or Saviour, and his Holy Spirit ; to which distinct Operations are ascribed ; Mercy to the Lord towards his People, Deliverance to the Angel of his Presence, Vexation and Fighting against the *Israelites* to his Holy Spirit. I will add but one Passage more out of the Old Testament, and that is the Seraphical *Trisagion* which the Prophet heard in his Vision, *Is. vi. 3. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts* ; by which treble Repetition it appears, *ver. 8.* that the Trinity is meant ; *Who will go for us ?* and particularly *Jesus Christ*, *John xii. 41.* and the Holy Ghost, *Acts xxviii. 26.* All these Places being so clear, it would be needless, and indeed almost endless, to alledge those of the New Testament, which are yet clearer, as that *John xiv. 16, 17. Acts ii. 32, 33. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.* and the like : But one I must beg leave to repeat, because it contains a Fact wherein the three Persons were distinctly seen or heard ; it is that, *Matt. iii. 16, 17. Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straitway out of the Water ; and lo, the Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Here we have the Father speaking from Heaven, the Son ascending out of the River *Jordan*, and the Holy Ghost descending in the Air like a Dove, and pitching upon him. So true was that Saying of the Ancients, *Abi, Ariane, ad Jordanem, & videbis Trinitatem !* Go, thou *Arian,*

Arian, to the River *Jordan*, and there thou shalt see the Trinity.

Having thus explained, to the best of my Understanding, what I here propos'd to myself, *viz.* the Doctrine of the Trinity in general, or of the Unity of the Godhead in three Persons, and of three Divine Persons in one Essence; I think it will not be amiss, if I reduce the whole Matter into some Heads, which may serve to guide us in our Apprehensions of that great Mystery. These are then the chief Points which result from what has been said, and are evident in Scripture, and which we ought to know and believe concerning the Trinity. First, That in the Godhead there is but one Essence or Substance, which belongs equally to the three Persons. There is an Essence, because there is a Godhead: And there is but one, because there cannot be many; it being impossible there should be more Gods than one, who should possess equally the same Nature. This Essence is not a Being really distinguish'd from the Persons, no more than the Persons from the Essence: For then the Deity would be some other thing than God; or it would itself make another God than the Divine Persons. And it is equally communicated to the three Persons, because each of them has it whole, and each of them is God; otherwise one would be unequal to the others; or if each Person had but a Portion of the Deity, there would be three distinct Gods, or rather there would be none at all. Besides this, there would be three Substances, which is absurd: One Essence cannot be three Substances, but one only. The Scripture is express upon this Head; it tells us plainly that there is but one God; that the Son and the Father are one: And it speaks of the Holy Ghost to the same effect.

The second Point is, That in the Godhead there is but one God, tho' there be three Divine Persons, whereof each of them notwithstanding is the same

God, tho' they are distinguish'd amongst themselves, as to their manner of subsisting. The Reason is, that the Father is called God in Scripture, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God; and yet we are taught there, that there is but one God, as Nature itself informs us: Wherefore the three Persons must be but one and the same God.

The third is, That tho' there be but one God, yet there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are but one and the same God; but yet Scripture and Reason acquaint us, that the Son is not the Father, and the Holy Ghost is another than the Son or the Father; there must be therefore some Distinction, *viz.* Modal, in their Personalities; otherwise the Son would be the Father, and the Holy Ghost would be the Son and the Father. Which being not so, and the Christian Doctrine forbidding us to confound them, there must be somewhat in each Person to distinguish it from the others.

The fourth is, That altho' there be not three Gods, yet however the Deity subsists in three *Supposita*: So that we must say, this is another than that, or that. This is evident in the Baptism of *Jesus Christ* by *John* the Baptist in *Jordan*; for other is he who speaks from Heaven, other who appears in the Air like a Dove, other who comes up out of the River; And if there be but one *Suppositum* amongst them, we must alter our Style, and say, that the Father and the Holy Ghost were baptized with *Jesus Christ*; since he is not another *Suppositum* than they, and so he will be only distinguish'd from them in Name, and by an OEconomy, wherein the Father is pleased to shew himself under the Title of Son at his Baptism, and of Holy Ghost on other Occasions.

The fifth is, That there is somewhat, *i. e.* Modal, which distinguishes the three Divine Persons, that Distinction being not barely Transitory, Nominal, or OEconomical. Now that which distinguishes them

them is their Manner of subsisting in the Deity, each Person subsisting after another Manner than the others. But ¹ all Men will not understand this; they will not believe that there is somewhat in one Person, which is not in the others; and that one and the same Substance should have three different Subsistences; ² that the same God, who cannot be begotten in the Father, should be begotten in the Son; and that he who is the Spring of the other two, should be derived and proceed from them both: And this, in Spite of all that Scripture, or the Catholick Church can say to the contrary. But the Christian Faith is, that from all Eternity, each Person is God; that from all Eternity, the Father has another Subsistence than the Son, and the Son another than the Holy Ghost; and that from all Eternity, what primarily distinguishes the three Divine Persons from one another, is their different Manner of subsisting; whereby the Father is one *Suppositum*, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost another; the Deity being equally communicated to them. All which is expressly contained in, or fairly deducible from the Word of God.

The sixth and last Point is, That of the three Divine Persons, the First is called the Father, the Second the Son, or the Word, as in the Writings of our Apostle, and the Third the Holy Ghost, as in the Text, and elsewhere throughout the New Testament. But the Explication of this, and the particular Prosecution of this Matter, as I have intimated before, I must reserve for the next *Discourse*.

And thus I have given you an Account in general of the Doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence, in as few and full Words as I could, to the end you might know, in this summary Way, what you ought of this sublime

¹ Clendon's *Traité de Personâ*, pag. 172, 173, 174.

² Idem, pag. 191, 192.

Mystery, and no more ; exhorting you seriously to keep to that which is written, without diving too deep into an Abyſs which may ſwallow you up. The greateſt Lights of the Church have forewarned us long ago, how dangerous it is to ſearch too far into it. Hold we therefore to this Rule, and we ſhall tread ſafely ; acquieſce we in the things that are revealed, and leave we the Secret unto God. He has imparted to us a competent Measure of the Knowledge of himſelf, to make us love and ſerve him, and behave ourſelves ſuitably in his Communion : When it will be neceſſary that we ſhould have higher Degrees of Light concerning his Deity, and we ſhall be able to bear them ; he will find out Ways to convey them to us. Now *we walk by Faith* ; now *we know GOD but in Part, and we ſee him but in Part* : But a Day will come, an eternal Day, when *we ſhall ſee him even as he is*. And then ſhall we perfectly, and with Admiration, underſtand the great Myſtery of the Ever-blessed Trinity ; nay, we ſhall be made ourſelves Partakers of the Divine Nature. Let us wait therefore with Patience, and Humility of Heart, for that Time or rather Eternity of our Perfection ; when the Archives of Immortality being opened, we ſhall read therein thoſe unſearchable Myſteries, which are now unknown to us, or which we but very imperfectly underſtand. And in the mean while, apply we ourſelves to the Study of thoſe which are diſcloſed to us in the Goſpel ; let us believe what the Scripture tells us of them ; let us ſubmitt our Reason to Faith ; till it ſhall pleaſe God to manifeſt fully and clearly to us thoſe things, which as yet *we ſee but thro' a Glaſs darkly* ; when he himſelf will diſplay to us all his Secrets in the Palace of his Glory. Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant !





DISCOURSE IV.

Baptism in the Trinity.

MATTH. XXVIII. 19.

Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.



IF we should judge of GOD by the several Notices he has imparted to us of himself in the Creatures, we should have a multitude of Ideas of him; and yet for all that, would not be able to tell what he is, or wherein his Essence, Properties, and Relations consist. He will appear to us as a Creator, when we shall see all things issuing forth out of his Bosom: He will shew himself a Preserver, upon whom all Things depend for their Continuance; when we shall observe how he upholds them with his Hand, that they may not fall into their primitive Nothing again: He will prove himself a Redeemer, when we shall behold him

him saving his People from their Sins; he will be a Sanctifier, when we shall consider him as converting his Elect: In a word, we shall perceive him to be all in all. The Reason thereof is, that every thing is an Emanation of his Being; and whatever does not represent him to us, is nothing. But yet it must be own'd, that these external Denominations being so far removed from his intimate Nature, as they are, though they may shew us God in these several Capacities, they cannot give us a very close Insight into his Deity, the Mystery of the three Divine Persons, and those intrinsecal Acts by which they are distinguish'd. ¹ And particularly the Works of Creation themselves, Redemption, and Sanctification, which are conversant about the Creatures, not the Creator; the Redeemed, not the Redeemer; the Sanctified, not the Sanctifier; Temporary, not Eternal; and Common, not Proper: As glorious as they may be, and as worthy of God; can never exhibit to us the three Persons in the Divine Essence, or be the Personalities upon which they are founded, if we will stand to the Award of the Holy Scriptures, and the Resolution of the Catholick Church in this moot Point. For these must accordingly be three internal, eternal, and uncommunicable Acts in the Godhead, not to load it with other needless Words here, And therefore a certain late ² Author, with all his feigned Respect for the Church of *England*, whereof he pretends himself to be a Member, and which he seems to look upon as the soundest Part of the Catholick; does extremely prevaricate, as he does indeed throughout his whole Book, in falsely imputing to its *Catechism*, that it makes the Divine Personalities consist in the Actions of Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification; as I shall take Occasion by and

¹ Clendon's *Traité de Personà*, pag. 185. to 190.

² *Idem*, pag. 183, 184.

by to demonstrate, out of the very Passages he quotes for that purpose : The same thing which he does as to the Scriptures themselves, throughout the Conclusion of that *Traſt* ; though he would make us believe all along, that he has a great Reverence for them ; but it is no farther than they serve the *Socinian* Hypothesis, which he follows in all its Parts : Which I shall endeavour to prove to be Unscriptural, and Uncanonical Doctrine, by explaining the true in this *Discourse* , out of the Text I have chosen to be the Subject of it ; *Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Which Words contain a Summary of the Christian Doctrine, or the Form prescribed by *Jesus Christ* to be used in the Admission of Persons, whether Infants, or Adult, into the Gospel-Church, or to the Profession of the Catholick Faith. And they are indispensably required to be repeated in Baptism, by him that administers it, there being no such Sacrament without them, or Terms to that Effect ; nor no Reiterating of it, as it is held by some, where the Ceremony has been once performed with them, and the outward Matter, *i. e.* Water. But I must beg Leave to explain this, and add, by a Minister lawfully called ; this being as essential to it as the rest. For to declare my Opinion here freely upon that Point, I cannot but think that all *Lay-Baptism* is *invalid* : And I must look, till I have better Reasons to convince me, upon that Story of *Athanasius's*, when a Lad amongst his Play-Fellows, baptizing one of them, which is the only Foundation in Antiquity for it, as a downright Invention of *Ruffinus*, or at least a groundless Report taken up by him, especially as to that Action's being allowed ; it being nowhere mentioned, that I know of, by any other before him. Now this Text is capable of a double Interpretation, as it may be taken in two different respects.

spects. For, 1st, As it relates to the Minister, it intimates to us, that what he performs in *Teaching*, or making Disciples; for that is the Import of the Term in the Original, and *Baptizing*; he does it not in his own Name, or by any Civil and Secular Authority or Commission, but in the Name, and by Authority and Commission of the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity. Which as it speaks the Honour and Dignity of his Office, and the Validity of our Calling in general as Christians, both depending on a Divine Commission; so it proclaims openly the Presumption and Arrogance of those who take upon them to Teach and Baptize, *i. e.* admitt Men into the Church of *Christ*, without any Ground, or Shew of Authority from God to that purpose; which must needs be a great Usurpation. And, 2^{dly}, As it concerns the Persons who are to be *Baptized*; for it is in the *Greek*, *into the Name*; it implies what Acknowledgment or Profession they make, *viz.* that they embrace and own the glorious Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and are ready to submit to all things which are required to be believed, or done by them, in order to their Salvation. That as these three Divine Persons did from all Eternity consult and contrive the Method of their Redemption, and severally acted their distinct Parts in it; so, as far as they shall be acquainted with it, they are disposed to acquiesce in it, and are heartily willing to regulate themselves accordingly. *Go ye therefore*, says our Saviour to his Apostles, *and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

So that according to this general Paraphrase on the Words, waving here the first respect wherein they may be considered, as not falling within the Compass of my present Design; there are two things included in our professing the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: One is, that we acknowledge that there
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are three such Divine Persons as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the Eternal Godhead ; and likewise what each of them has done for us, in order to our Salvation ; and the other, that to the same end, we readily submit to, and acquiesce in whatever they require to be believed, or done by us ; being heartily disposed to regulate ourselves accordingly. Which brings me into what I promised in my former *Discourse* upon this Subject, *viz.* a particular Consideration of each Person in the Divine Trinity ; wherein I will make this Meditation as practical as the Matter can bear, according to my Intention in all of them.

As to the First Head then, which is the Substance of the *Apostles Creed* ; we have it excellently set forth to the meanest Capacity by our Church in its *Catechism*, and comprized under these three Articles, *viz.* First, to believe in God the Father, who hath made us, and all the World : Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed us, and all Mankind : Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies us, and all the elect People of God. And I think, if I should follow any other Exposition, or Method in the Prosecution of this Point, I should do amiss. But before I go farther, I cannot but wonder how the before-mentioned Author came to draw in this Portion of *Scripture*, which I am now explaining, the *Apostles Creed*, some Passages of our *Liturgy*, particularly the Beginning of the *Litany*, and this of our *Church-Catechism*, to support his Notion, which is no way countenanced there. For not to ramble like him, but to speak only to what has some Appearance of Probability, though the Text does not exclude the Operations of Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification, which doubtless belong to the three Persons ; yet it does not make the Personalities consist in them ; indeed it says nothing of them expressly, or rather it implies the contrary.

Clendon's *Treat. de Personâ*, pag. 179, to 182.

And as to the Exposition of our *Church-Catechism*, it offers only to our Belief, according to the *Scripture*, the *Apostles Creed*, and the whole Tenor of our *Liturgy*; that each of the three Persons is God; and that one is the Father, the other the Son, and the other the Holy Ghost: Or in the Style of the Fathers and Schoolmen, whom, I am afraid, he has not so much study'd as the *Fratres Polonos*, that the Divine Personalities consist in the eternal *Paternity*, *Filiation*, and *Spiration*; which he may see comes to the same thing. It is true, our Church has not pretended to explain the Manner of these Acts, which the Scripture has sealed up in a Mystery, till the Illuminations of a brighter World appear: Nor did think fit, in a *Rudiment of Christian Institution*, to instruct its *Catechumens* in the Controversial Part of this Doctrine: This is necessary but to some on the account of *Hereticks*. What is added concerning the Creation of all the World, the Redemption of all Mankind, and the Sanctification of all the Elect People of God, is not to define the three Divine Persons, as any Man may perceive, but to describe them; not to distinguish the Personalities *ad intra*, but the Persons *ad extra*. It is a Part of the Christian Belief, necessary to be immediately joined with the other; for which Reason I have annex'd it by way of *Appendix* to the Text, to be now considered together.

To proceed then more particularly; the first Point under this Article consists in acknowledging that the first Person in the adorable Trinity, the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is also our Father by Adoption and Love, is that most High God, Simple, Eternal, Infinite, with other Divine Perfections; that it is impossible there should be more than one, or many Gods; and that as in a Family he is called *Pater-familias*, or Father of the Family amongst Men, from whom it is derived, and by whom it is ordered; so God by Analogy, but after

ter a more eminent way, is styled the Father in the Heavenly Family. For the Names of the Holy Trinity, or the intrinsecal Denominations of the three Persons, being taken from the Manner wherein the Deity subsists in them, since it subsists in the first as in the Fountain-Head, as the Scripture intimates to us in several places; he is rightly term'd God the Father. And this first Person owning no Principle of itself, and being neither made, nor created, nor begotten, or derived from any other, could not be better denominated even in this Sense. Moreover, as there must be an Order amongst the Divine Persons, it being the Right of the first to command and dispose things; so it is with good Reason that the Title of the Father of his Family is given him, being the chief Dispenser in that OEconomy. But the true and proper Ground of that Appellation here is, that the Deity subsists in him as in a Person that begets: Now he that begets another is a Father, and a distinct Person from his Son. The Scripture attributes to him to have begotten *Jesus Christ*; *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*, Psal. ii. 7. which the *Jews* themselves confess to be meant of the *Messias*. And indeed he is call'd the *Son*, ver. 12. and the *Kings and Judges of the Earth* are enjoined there to *kiss* him, i. e. to worship him as God, according to the Style of Holy Writ. Not to mention *John* i. 14. where he is named *the only begotten of the Father*, on the Account of his eternal Generation, as *Rom.* viii. 32. *God's own Son*, in Contradistinction to his adoptive Sons; and other Passages to the same purpose. But the *Anti-Trinitarians* being willing to own one Person as God, and even as Father, though not upon the same Ground that the *Orthodox* do; I think I need say no more here to prove or explain this Point.

And therefore I go on to the other, which the Church has thought fit to join with it in the *Catechism*, for our farther Instruction, viz. That *God the*

Father hath made us, and all the World. Which consists in professing, that he is the Creator of the Universe, the Maker of the visible and invisible World, especially of Angels and Men. This great Truth, to mention no more, is set forth in general by *Job*, in a very Philosophical manner: *God alone*, says he, (exclusively of any Creature) *spreadeth out the Heavens, and treadeth upon the Waves of the Sea: He maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the Chambers of the South,* *Job ix. 8, 9.* And by *Isaiah*, in a noble lofty Strain; *I am the Lord*, says God, *that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that spreadeth the Earth by myself, (by no other Agent)* *Is. xlv. 24.* as likewise *Chap. xlv. 12.* *I have made the Earth, and created Man upon it: I, even my Hands have stretched out the Heavens, and all their Host have I commanded.* Which he had express'd before thus, *Chap. xl. 12.* *Who hath measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand? and meted out Heaven with the Span, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains with Scales, and the Hills in a Balance? And ver. 28.* *Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?* But in particular, God the Father is the Creator of Angels, and Men: For as to the former, not to alledge those Texts wherein they are denoted under the Expression of the *Host of Heaven*, they are understood to be signified in that of *Job xxxviii. 7.* *When the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.* And *Heb. xii. 11.* he is styled expressly, *the Father of Spirits.* As to Men, our first Parent, *Adam*, is not only called the *Son of God*, *Luke iii. 38.* though not in the same Sense that *Jesus Christ* is so, because the Father begot him after an incomprehensible Manner from all Eternity; yet forasmuch as he made him in Time. But in the History of the Creation of the World, we have an Account in short how that was done, *viz.* *That the Lord God formed Man of the Dust of the*
Ground,

Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul, Gen. ii. 7. And then comes the Question, *Mal. ii. 10.* *Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?* Yes, doubtless, we are all drawn from the same Original, cast into the same Mould, and made of the same Matter, which God animates with the same Breath of Life. The Truth is, where-ever he has been acknowledged, even amongst the Heathens, by the Philosophers and Poets, he has been own'd, called, and worshipped as the Father, Maker, and Preserver of all things. ¹ *Plato* says of him, ἦν, καὶ οὐρανόν, καὶ θεός, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ τὰ ἄδρυ, καὶ ὑπὸ γῆς ἐργάζεσθαι that he is the Worker of the Earth, the Heaven, and the Gods, and of all things in Heaven, in Hell, and under the Earth. And *Aratus*, whom *S. Paul* quotes to the same purpose, tells us, that we are God's Offspring, καὶ γὰρ καὶ γέννησμεν, *Acts xvii. 28.* He is the Fountain of all Beings; and he has such a boundless Power, that as by his Word he spoke all things out of Nothing; so he can as easily speak them into Nothing again, if he pleases; all depending upon his Will.

² So that this noble and wonderful System of Heaven and Earth, which we behold in a continual and orderly Motion, and which has remained thus for several Ages, did not always exist, as *Aristotle* fancy'd, nor leap'd into it by Chance, as *Epicurus* and others imagined; but was first set a-going by the Almighty Hand of this great Father of the Universe, and was, in comparison of his eternal Being, but a meer new and upstart thing. This may in some measure be observed by any Man, who will but enquire into the Writings of the most ancient ³ Heathens themselves, besides those of the Bible; which because some of them afford Arguments, that pre-

¹ *Plato de Rep. Lib. 10.*

² *Vide Discourse VI. on Philipp. ii. 6.* ³ *Orpheus, Thales Milesius apud Lact. Lib. de Falsâ Relig.*

vail more upon certain Minds, than the bare Relations of Scripture, I shall not think it improper to take Notice of them here. These Authors then speak of nothing more early than the *Theban* or the *Trojan War*, or the Expedition of the *Argonauts*; ¹ unless it be of some confused Notions of the Origine of their Gods, and the Beginning of the World, as their Fancy led them. All which are but a corrupt and wrong Imitation of such Matters as were conveyed to them by uncertain Tradition, or they derived from the History of *Moses*, which way soever they came at it. ² It is *Lucretius's* Reasoning hereupon against the Eternity of the World: "If the World had no Beginning, how comes it to pass that we have no Account of things in the Poets, higher than the *Theban* or the *Trojan War*?" With more to the same Effect in * *Virgil*. Which will farther be manifest, if we reflect upon the Invention of Arts necessary to the Preservation and Conveniency of Life, whereof the first Inventors, with the Improvement of them, are well known, or easily traced out in those Writings. The Strength of which Argument lies in this, that these Arts being absolutely necessary, or highly convenient for Life, Men rack'd their Wit to invent them, as soon as they felt their Need of them, *i. e.* as soon as they were born, or could set their Heads and Hands to work: And consequently if the World was eternal, the first Inventors of these things, and the very Improvement of them in the first Degrees, could never be reach'd by the Historians. Besides that by the Providence of God, as a collateral Testimony to the Scripture, we have the Books extant which write of the earliest Plantations of Nations, and the Transmigrations of them, and

¹ Hesiod. Theog. Ovid. Met. Lib. 1.

² Lucret. Lib. 5. *Prætere à si nulla fuit, &c.*

* Virg. Lib. 1. Georg. *Ut varios usus, &c.* —

Tum variae venere artes. —

what is most ¹ ancient in them. It cannot be pretended with any Colour of Reason, that the various Inundations, Depopulations, and Changes which the World has undergone at several times, may have hinder'd the transmitting the Records of the respective preceding Ages, and totally destroy'd them. For as this is but a Shift of Atheistical Men, and said only, but not proved, or bottom'd upon any ground, by such as know no other way to deny the Making of the Universe, and the Newness of its Existence; so it shews pretty plainly, that there was amongst those ancient Heathens a Tradition of *Noah's Flood*, and of the Overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by Fire; which must be derived to them from the History of the *Bible*. It remains therefore, that all things were made, as they are described by *Moses* in his *Genesis*, by the great Creator of the World, and not as they are delivered by two late ² Authors, in their whimsical Hypotheses of that Matter.

Which being supposed, the Newness of the World, compared with God's Eternity, will clearly appear to us thence, especially if we consider the Successions of Men, since the time that the first was created, as we have them recorded in the sacred History. The Scripture assures us, that *Noah* was but the tenth Man from *Adam*, in the Space of 1656. *i. e.* from the Creation to the End of the Flood. And by the Genealogies preserved there, and the Observation of succeeding Ages, we find, that since *Noah*, three Generations, one with another, take up but 100 Years from Father to Son. So that if it be not more than about 4080 Years since the Flood, as by common Computation it is not, it is evident there is no Man now living above 132 Generations removed in a direct Line from *Adam* himself, (including the ten

¹ Diodor. Sic. Justin. ex Trogo: & alii.

² Burnet's Theor. Telluris. Whiston's New Theory.

before the Flood) and that the World is but 5719 Years old, more or less, as it is generally reckon'd. Whereby you see, how easy it is, by reasoning with a little Assistance from the *Bible*, to demonstrate the Beginning of the World, and to trace up things to their first Principle, the Father and Creator of the Universe. He having then erected this great and stately Fabrick, as a Palace for him to dwell in, made at last our first Parent of the Dust of the Earth, and breathed into him an immortal Breath of Life: And not only so, but he placed him in the Garden of *Eden*, the Terrestrial Paradise, to remain there in perfect Felicity, till he should afterwards, continuing in his Integrity, be translated into the Regions of everlasting Bliss and Glory, without passing through Death. But this he soon debarr'd himself from, by disobeying his Maker in a very easy Matter, one would think, the Abstaining from one Fruit amidst a thousand; whereby he, and his Posterity with him, forfeited that happy State, and became like the Beasts that perish, liable to all the Miseries of Life, and to Death itself, and even eternal Wo and Confusion.

Nevertheless, God having created Man, would not lose him so; but in his infinite Mercy contrived a Way to recover him from that State of Sin and Misery wherein he had plunged himself, and to restore him to a Capacity of being happy; and that was, by sending into the World his Son, his only Son, begotten of him from all Eternity, to redeem Mankind. Which leads me into the Consideration of the Second Article of our Christian Profession, *viz.* That the second Person in the Holy Trinity is *God the Son, who hath redeemed us and all Mankind.* Where we are to own, 1. That *Jesus Christ* is the true Son of God, ' not barely as be-

gotten or conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, nor as appointed to an eminent Office by the Divine Providence, as Kings and Sovereign Magistrates, who are therefore styled in Scripture *Gods*, and *the Children of the most High*, Psal. lxxxii. 6. nor yet as raised by God from the Dead; neither as constituted Heir of all Things, by his Exaltation to the Right Hand of the Majesty on High; tho' S. Paul, *Hebr.* i. 5. applies to him on this Account that Saying, *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*: But especially as he is the only begotten Son of God, in a peculiar and supernatural Way of Filiation, before he was conceived in the Virgin's Womb, even from all Eternity; and as he is the Natural Son of God, begotten of his Substance, not by Division or Multiplication of Essence, whereof the Deity is incapable; but by a real and total Communication of his Nature to Him, and of all its Essentialities: *God of God*, as the *Nicene Creed* expresses it, which ought to be our Polar Star in these nice Explications; *Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one Substance with the Father*. Which Communication of Nature is properly the Generation of the Son, all Generation being a vital Production of another Being, or Person, in the same specifical or individual Nature. And this being a Communication of the same Numerical Essence, though above our Reason, and a Matter of Faith, must be the most perfect Generation. Now though the Manner of this eternal Generation be incomprehensible to us, yet the Thing is most certain, and it would be impious in us to cavil at it, since the Scripture has declared it; wherein we ought to rest satisfy'd, if we will be Christians: Which is evident, besides the Passages already quoted for the Paternity of the Fa-

‡ Clendon's *Traité de Personà*, Pag. 167, 168.

ther, and that famous one *Prov. viii. 22, to 32.* from this Text of *Mic. v. 2.* *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the Thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose Goings-forth have been from of Old, from Everlasting, or the Days of Eternity.* Where it is observable, that these eternal Goings-forth of the *Messias* or *Christ*, who it is plain from the Words is intended here, are opposed to the temporal Act of the Town of *Bethlehem*, by his Birth of the blessed Virgin : And likewise that by them is meant his Generation, nothing else being conceivable in this place, than such a substantial Action, which preceded all Creation.

¹ But, 2. As we are to believe, that *Jesus Christ* is the true Son of God in this Sense ; so also that he is God, properly so called. Which though it be pretty evident from the Text, *Baptizing into the Name of the Son*, being an admitting of one into Covenant with him as God ; upon which Account *S. Peter* tells us, *1 Pet. iii. 21.* that *Baptism is the Answer*, or the Stipulation of a good Conscience towards God ; yet I shall prove it here these two Ways : 1. By the proper Names of God, which are given him in Scripture ; 2. By the Divine Attributes, which are ascribed to him there. As to the first Head of Proofs, not to multiply Passages without Necessity, we meet with this amongst several others in the Old Testament, which is very plain to my Purpose ; *Thy Throne, O God*, says *David*, *Pf. xlv. 6.* *is for ever*, which is apply'd *verbatim* to *Jesus Christ*, *Heb. i. 8.* *But unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* But that of *Is. ix. 6, 7.* is so full, that I may not omit it here ; *Unto us*, says the Prophet, *a Child is born ; unto us a*

¹ Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 72. *Pos. 7. & passim.* Idem, *Prim. Christ. Rev.* Vol. IV. p. 77. N.B. p. 98. N.B. & p. 102. N.B.

Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder; and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, 'The mighty God,' 'The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the Increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no End. As for the New Testament, the first Name we find given in the Gospel to the second Person in the Holy Trinity, which is that of *Jesus*, implies his being God; for it signifies Saviour, by Way of Eminency, and in a Spiritual Sense, as it is applied to him; and then *who can save, or forgive Sins, but God only?* Mark ii. 7. Upon which Account the Evangelist, *S. Matthew*, i. 23. refers to him that Prophecy of *Isaiah*, *Behold, a Virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his Name Emanuel, (which being interpreted, is God with us.)* The noble Confession of *S. Thomas* is not to be pass'd over here in Silence, because it is an useful Example of what a Man ought to do upon Conviction. He then being absent, when our Blessed Saviour shew'd himself to his Disciples the first time after his Resurrection, could not be persuaded of a thing by their Report, which at his Death none of them seem to have had any Thought of; but as soon as he saw him, and the Print of the Nails in his Hands, and felt the Scar in his Side, he cried out, *My Lord, and my God*, John xx. 28. *S. Paul*, in his Charge to the Elders of *Ephesus*, when he committed the Care of Christ's Flock to them, calls him expressly *God*, Acts xx. 28. *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the Flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.* And *Rom. ix. 5.* *Christ, God blessed for ever.* To us, says the same Apostle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. viii. 6. *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things, and we in him; and one*

¹ Clendon's *Traff. de Personà*, chap. 2. p. 31. to 48.

² Whist. *Hist. Pref.* p. 10. *Quest.* 3.

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things, and we by him. To which we may add that of 1 Tim. iii. 16. God was manifest in the Flesh; that of Tit. ii. 13. Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the ¹ great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; that of 1 John v. 20. This is the ² true God, (speaking of the Son of God) and that of Jude 4. There are certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this Condemnation, ungodly Men, turning the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; with many more to the same effect. It would be absurd, and contrary to all Reason, to imagine,³ notwithstanding any little Distinctions, and sly Evasions that may be used to the contrary, that these various Names and Titles which are peculiar to God, should be so plainly, without any Limitation, ascribed to Jesus Christ in Scripture, unless he were truly, *i. e.* essentially God; considering especially how very cautious the Holy Penmen are of yielding the least Occasion for Idolatry, and of affording any the smallest Pretence for paying any Part of Divine Honour to any Creature whatsoever, of what Quality, Degree, or Eminency soever it may be above others.

⁴ And as to the second Head of Proofs, whereby Jesus Christ is demonstrated to be God, *viz.* the Divine Attributes which are apply'd to him in Scripture; I shall confine myself at present to those we call Incommunicable, which cannot be imparted to the Creature, as indeed none of them can by a formal Communication of Essence. Those of Simplicity and Eternity, I presume, I may wave here; the

¹ Idem, Vol. IV. p. 20. to 23. N. B.

² Ibidem.

³ Clendon's *Traité de Personâ*, p. 208. to 211.

⁴ Whiston's *Hist. Pref. Append.* 104. Mr. Towns. *Dep.* Idem,, Vol. IV. p. 108, 109. N. B.

former being ¹ already accounted for in the preceding *Discourse*, and the latter reserv'd for ² another which is to follow: As to that of Omniscience, if any Man doubts it to be an incommunicable Attribute of God, let him read that Passage *1 Kings* viii. 39. being Part of that noble Prayer of *Solomon* at the Dedication of his Temple; *Thou*, says he to God, *even thou only, knowest the Hearts of all the Children of Men*: Such an Instance of Knowledge as includes all the rest! And yet *Jesus Christ* ascribes it to himself, *Rev. ii. 23. All the Churches shall know, that I am he which searcheth the Reins and Hearts*. Well might he say so, since he knows him who exceeds all Knowledge, *i. e.* the Father, as the Son is known only by him; *No Man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any Man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*, *Matth. xi. 27. Lord*, says *S. Peter* to him, *John* xxi. 17. *thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus knew from the Beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him*, *John vi. 64. Because he knew all Men, and needed not that any should testify of Man; for he knew what was in Man*, *John ii. 24, 25. The Attribute of Omnipresence is no less Divine, if we will be determin'd by Scripture; Thus saith the Lord, The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footstool; where is the House that ye build unto me? and where is the Place of my Rest? Is. lxvi. 1. Now this our Blessed Saviour ascribes to himself, in his gracious Promises to the Faithful, Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, says he, Matth. xviii. 20. there am I in the midst of them. And in the Verse immediately following my Text, Lo, I am with you alway, tells he is Disciples, even unto the End of the World.*

¹ *Discourse III. on 1 John v. 7.*

² *Discourse VI. on Philipp. ii. 6.*

And lastly, that of Omnipotence, which is also a Divine and an Incommunicable Attribute, is apply'd to the Son, as well as to the Father; *What Things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise*, John v. 19. The Title of Almighty, which is given him in both the Testaments, as to the Father, and the Holy Ghost, makes it good: And the several Miracles he wrought during his Abode in the Flesh, are so many sensible Instances of it. From all which, it fully appears, that *Jesus Christ* is God.

But, 2. As we must acknowledge *Jesus Christ* to be God, so are we likewise to profess, according to the Doctrine of Scripture, and the Exposition of our Church, that *he hath redeemed us, and all Mankind*: That is, we are to believe, and openly own, that in the Time of *Augustus Caesar* he took upon him our Nature, and was born of the Virgin *Mary* in *Bethlehem* of *Judah*; being perfect God, and perfect Man, united in one and the same Person, after an incomprehensible and unspeakable Manner. That in this Person, so united, he appeared in the World, and preach'd his Gospel, confirming it by many undoubted Miracles: That he died for the Expiation of our Sins, and within three Days rose again for our Justification: That he ascended into Heaven visibly, and in the Sight of his Disciples, and sat down at the Right Hand of God, whence he is to return to judge the Quick and the Dead: And that thence, according to his Promise, he sent the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, God equal with the Father and the Son, to guide the Ministry, which he himself had instituted for the Conversion of the World, and to sanctify and complete the Number of his Elect. In these several Things seems to me to consist the Redemption of all Mankind by *Jesus Christ*: Which being but an explicit Deduction of what, I hope, we are all persuaded of; I come in the last place to consider the Third Article of our Christian Confession, viz. That we believe

believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies us, and all the elect People of God.

This consists then, 1. In professing, that the Holy Ghost is the Third Person in the Glorious Trinity, ¹ God equal with the Father, and the Son, as I but now intimated, and proceeding from them both, (contrary to the fore-mentioned ² Authors) by Way of *Spiration*, not *Generation*: For the Son being said in Scripture to be *begotten of the Father*, but the Holy Ghost to *proceed*, and likewise to be *sent* by the *Father* and the *Son*, and to be the *Spirit* of the *Son*; our Church has thought fit to follow herein the *Nicene Creed*, as receiv'd by the *Latins*, rather than by the *Greeks*. I would now then, according to the Method used on the former Articles, go about to confirm the Truth of the Holy Ghost's being God; but that as the *Macedonians* did of old, so ³ some *Socinians* of late have asserted, that he is not a Person at all, which was not pretended of either of the two others, but an Energy or Quality only. And therefore my first Business here must be to remove this Objection, and to establish the Reality of his Person. Now if that Axiom is true, as I think it is agreed on all hands, *Actiones sunt Suppositorum*, that Actions are of *Suppositums*, I need use no other Argument to set this Matter beyond all Dispute, than the Personal Actions which are attributed to him in Scripture. As, *ex gr.* to teach; *The Comforter*, which is the Holy Ghost, *whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*, John xiv. 26. To testify; *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father*,

¹ Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 31. Idem, Vol. IV. Art. 19. p. 334. 30 360.

² Clendon's Tract. de Personâ, p. 170, 171.

³ Idem, & alii passim, per consequentiam.

even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, John xv. 26. To intercede; The Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered; he maketh Intercession for the Saints, according to the Will of God, Rom. viii. 26, 27. Besides several others grounded upon formal Texts, which it would be superfluous to produce here. It cannot be pretended with any Colour of Reason, that these Actions may by some Figure or other be ascribed to the Holy Ghost, though they are properly God's; because they can in no kind of Speech be said of the Father or the Son upon the Account of any Efficacy in them, which may be called their Spirit: For being sent by the Father in the Son's Name, *to teach*; being sent by the Son from the Father, *to testify* of the Son; according to the Will of God, *to intercede*, and the like; are all Personal Actions intimated to be done by another than the Father, or the Son; and therefore the Holy Ghost must be a Person. And a Person distinct from the Father and the Son; because these Actions, peculiarly restrained to him here, cannot agree to either of the two other Persons.

And so I fall into my Method again, *viz.* to prove, That the Holy Ghost is God, according to the Doctrine of Scripture: Which I will endeavour to do, as before in respect of *Jesus Christ*, by shewing, 1st, That the Name of God is expressely given him there; 2^{dly}, That the Divine Attributes are likewise ascribed to him; which will amount to a full Proof of this Point. As to the first Head, the *Arians* formerly, in the Disputes concerning the Consubstantiality of the Son; and the *Macedonians* after them, in those about the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; insisted to have the Articles of Faith demonstrated to them *totidem verbis*, as they are contained in Scripture, and would admitt no Consequences, though never so necessary and evident; but the *Socinians* pretend too much to Reason, to be so perverse and unreasonable.

How-

1 However the Cause stands in no Need of the seeming Favour of the last: And I am willing to humour the other once here, for Brevity's sake; and to confine myself for the same Reason to the Texts in the New Testament. S. Peter then saith, *Acts v. 3.* Ananias, *why hath Satan filled thine Heart to lye to the Holy Ghost?* And in the Verse immediately following, *Thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God.* What then? Why, let any one but use his common Sense, and he will see, that the Apostle calls the Holy Ghost expressly God. Again, *know ye not that ye are the Temple of God*, says S. Paul, *1 Cor. iii. 16.* *and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* And *Chap. vi. 19.* *What, know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?* What then? Why, any Man may perceive by his natural Logick, without a formal Syllogism, that from these two Verses put together, the Holy Ghost is necessarily and evidently God.

2 But to proceed to my second Head of Proofs, the Divine Attributes are likewise ascribed to him in Scripture; whereby it appears that he is truly and properly God. And to keep to those I have before instanced in, taking in that of Simplicity, and that of Eternity, which I passed over on the preceding Head concerning *Jesus Christ*, for the Reasons there alledged; the very Title of *Spirit*, to begin by that of *Simplicity*, which is his proper Name in Holy Writ, and whereby is denoted an uncreated and most perfect spiritual Being, without any kind of Composition; must needs make him infinitely simple in his Essence. As to that of *Eternity*, his Subsisting in the Beginning, before there was any Time, when the World was created; (for *Moses* tells us,

1 Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 11. *Quest.* 10. Idem, Vol. 4. *Art.* 20. pag. 361. to 373. p. 399. N. B. & passim.

2 Idem, Hist. Pref. p. 72. *Pos.* 5. Idem, Vol. 4. p. 353, 354. N. B. & passim.

Gen. i. 2. that then *the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters*) speaks him plainly eternal. That of Omniscience is affirmed of him in a very extraordinary Manner, *The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. David in one short Ejaculation, *Pf. cxxxix. 7.* emphatically sets forth his Omnipresence; *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* And his Omnipotence appears, in being essentially *the Power of the Highest*, Luke i. 35. The Holy Ghost is therefore a most simple, and an eternal Being; Omniscient in Knowledge, Omnipresent no less in Essence, than in Efficacy; and Omnipotent in Power, particularly in that over the Hearts of Men, which is not inferior to that of creating them. Which brings me to the Consideration of the other Part of this Article, *viz.* That *he sanctifies us, and all the elect People of God*, as we have it in the *Church-Catechism*.

But before I proceed upon that, because the other Author I am particularly engaged with here, in Contempt of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, denies him his Divine Worship, amongst his other Honours; (which is another Head of Proofs, besides that of his Divine Works in general, that I think I need not enlarge upon) I find myself obliged to say something in Opposition to it. Whereas then he¹ allows, that the Blessed Spirit is to be worship'd in the *Forms of Baptism, Doxology, and Blessing*; but never by *Invocation*; I have this to offer for an Answer: What can be understood by worshipping the Blessed Spirit in the Form of Baptism, which he allows; wherein the Child is *Baptized in, or into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; three distinct Persons, to whom we equally stipulate Obedience; but that each of them is God, and consequently is to be worship'd by Invocation? As to the Forms of Doxology, as we have them in the New Testament, though he positively² tells us, that the

¹ Whiston's Hist. Pref. pag. 50. & passim.

² Whiston's Append. to the 4th Vol. p. 8. N. B. & passim.

Holy Ghost is never mention'd in them at all; I will give him an Instance to the contrary, viz. Rev. i. 4, 5, 6. where he is called *the Seven Spirits which are before the Throne of God*, by a figurative Expression; not upon the account of Number, but Gifts: Which gave Occasion to the ancient Church to style him in her Hymns *Septiformis munere*, Septiform in Office. There it is observable, that the Apostle *wissheth*, or prays for *Grace and Peace to the Churches from the Holy Spirit*, as from God the Father, and from *Jesus Christ*; which implies a Worshipping of him by Invocation, or at least a mental Prayer, which cometh to the same thing in this Case. And as to the Forms of Blessing, which we meet with in Scripture, wherein he cannot deny that at least once the Holy Ghost is expressly mention'd, viz. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. what are they but Prayers to God from Superiors for those under their Care? As is evident in that of *Jacob* to the two Sons of *Joseph*, Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. And if the former was intended for a Pattern to the Church, as it has been used since for such; what does it suppose less than the Omnipresence and Omniscience, with other infinite Perfections of the Spirit; and consequently that he is God, and ought to be worship'd by Invocation? Or will he allow Degrees in Infinity? and persist in it, that the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are thereupon to be honour'd with an inferior Worship? For my part, this is past my Understanding, and my Belief too; since the Scripture makes no such Distinction, as to Divine Honours. It is scarce worth taking notice, that he lays a great Stress upon the Holy Ghost's being mention'd but once in a Scripture-Doxology, or Blessing; as if that were not as good as a thousand times in a Point of Apostolical Practice: And that he observes, that the Father is sometimes address'd to without the

Idem, Hist. Pref. pag. 10. Quest. xi.

Son, and the Son alone not so often as the Father; as if he that worshipping one Person, did not worship all three, *i. e.* the whole Godhead, however distinguish'd.

As we ought then to acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be the third Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity, and one God with the Father and the Son, so likewise, 2. to be the Sanctifier of the Elect, and the immediate Principle of all Faith and Holiness in Man; *i. e.* that it is peculiarly his Work to purify and cleanse those whom the Father pardoneth, and receives into Favour thro' the Mediation of the Son; and to fit them for his Kingdom of Grace here, and of Glory hereafter. This he does by incorporating the Faithful into one universal Church; and having united them with their Head, and the several Members with one another, by making of them all one and the same Body, whereof he is as it were the Soul, which animates it; as *S. Paul* intimates, *1 Cor. xii. 13. By one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles: By inspiring the Authors of the Old and New Testament with what they were to deliver for our Instruction; for the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man, says S. Peter, 2 Epist. i. 21. but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: And by imparting to the Church the Graces and Gifts it stands in need of; whether ordinary, as the Graces of Faith, Hope, and Charity; or extraordinary, as the Gifts of Tongues, Prophecy, Miracles, Healing, and the like: For all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as he will, 1 Cor. xii. 11. So that except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, as Jesus Christ tells Nicodemus, John iii. 5. he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. For which Reason S. Paul says to Titus, Tit. iii. 5. That God our Saviour, according to his Mercy, saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

Having

Having thus explained and asserted the Doctrine of the Catholick Church concerning the Ever-blessed Trinity; I must beg leave here to answer an Objection, which is stiffly insisted upon by the late ¹ Author I have had frequent Occasion to think of upon this Subject. It is the only thing that looks like an Argument in the whole Book, and may impose upon an otherwise judicious Reader, which makes him so fond of it, that besides the *Body* of the *Discourse*, he repeats it, or rather offereth it in his two *Epistles Dedicatory*. But to deal candidly with him, I will transcribe it in his own Words out of the first *Epistle*, where it is most in Form, and proposed to the best Advantage. *If each Person, says he, be God, whole God, he must comprehend all the Essentialities of the Divine Nature. Now if the Personalities be Essentialities, (as the Schools will have them) this can never be, for that each Person cannot sustain the Personalities of another. The Father cannot be the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Ghost be either, without confounding the Persons, and destroying the Trinity. So that there is an End of the School-Personalities.* This he tells us, after he had premised, that the Schools did assign the Personalities to be essential Acts of the Divine Nature within itself. Now if he pleases to give the Schools leave to explain themselves, they will answer him, that the Divine Personalities are grounded upon essential Acts of the Divine Nature within itself; because it is a received Maxim in their Theology, *Quicquid est in Deo, Deus est; That there is nothing in God, but what is God*; and consequently essential to, or an Essentiality of his Nature: And the ² Author himself owns, that there are no Accidents in God. But then these Essentialities are either Absolute, or Relative: Absolute they cannot be, for the Reasons which he gives; *if each Person is God, whole God, and*

¹ Clendon's *Traité de Personà*, *Epist. Dedicatory* to the Lord Chancellor Cowper, and to the Earl of Sunderland.

² Clendon's *Traité de Personà*, pag. 188.

comprehends all the Essentialities of the Divine Nature. But they may be, and are indeed Relative, without any Absurdity following thereupon; no confounding the Persons, nor destroying the Trinity, in the Case: On the contrary, each Person is thereby God with all his absolute Essentialities, and is incommunicably distinguish'd from the other two by his proper Personality, or Relative Essentiality of the Divine Person; at least as to their formal Conception, and our Manner of thinking. So that the School-Personalities, as he affects to term them, stand firm still, notwithstanding his feeble Efforts to undermine them. For after all, there is no room in this Mystery for Humane Reasoning, all must be submitted to Divine Revelation. And I dare appeal to the Judgment of those two Learned Lords, to whom this Author had the Presumption to dedicate so pernicious a Book, whether he has not throughout the whole *Treat* scandalously misrepresented the Doctrine of the Church of *England* concerning the Holy Trinity?

But I must not forget, that in my general Division of the Text, I said there was a second thing included in our professing the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, *viz.* that we readily submit to, and acquiesce in whatever they require to be believed, or done by us, in order to our Salvation; being heartily disposed to regulate ourselves accordingly: Which I must now briefly consider, and, as a proper Application of what has been delivered, therewith conclude. And indeed this is the true *Practical* Belief of this Doctrine, without which the *Speculative* would signify but little to us. This is properly to be baptized in, or admitted into the Christian Church, or into the Name of the three Divine Persons; *i. e.* to own them for the Lords of our Faith, and Spiritual Life, the three Principles and Authors of the Catholick Religion; and no others as such: To receive for infallible Truth, whatsoever is taught us by any, or all

of them; and for indispensable Duty, whatsoever is enjoined us by any or all of them; and nothing else. Were this duly attended to, and sincerely comply'd with, our Baptism in their Name would be available to us for all things, high and low, for which it was intended: And such a Belief of the Trinity would be as effectual to our Salvation, as if we had as distinct a Knowledge of it, as Men or Angels are most capable of. For it is not the Understanding of this Mystery, that God so much expects of us; whereof the greatest Scholars are almost as incapable, as the meanest Mechanics: But it is Faith in that Doctrine, attended with a suitable Practice, must save us; *i. e.* we must believe what these three Divine Persons have done for the Redemption of Mankind in general, and depend on them for what they will do for us in particular, and perform what is required on our part. If we then own what they have delivered us in Scripture, and submit to what they have commanded us, and honestly endeavour to order our Lives according to their Directions, and the Knowledge we can attain to: If we trust on God the Father, who made us, to have Mercy on us, and to forgive us our Sins; through the Merit of God the Son, who redeemed us, and satisfied for us; relying upon God the Holy Ghost to sanctify us, and purify our Hearts, and to fit us to enjoy him in his Kingdom above: Then though we do not, nor can understand the mysterious Part of our Religion; yet we know enough to make us true Christians, and Partakers of all the Benefits of that great Salvation, which those three Divine Persons eternally contrived in behalf of Mankind. *Wherefore, to that glorious Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, one God, and three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour and Praise!*





DISCOURSE V.



The Word Ever God.



JOHN i. i.

*In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God.*



Whoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father, says our Evangelist, 1 John, ii. 23. The Meaning whereof is, that those who do not confess that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, and is come into the World to save Mankind, have no true Knowledge of God the Father; but do in effect disown him. This the beloved Disciple had learn'd, as all the other Doctrines he has consigned to the Church, from his Divine Master, and ours; who tells us himself, John v. 23. that he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. The Truth is, there is no saving Knowledge of God, at least in the OEconomy

conomy we are under, without *Jesus Christ*. This is *Life Eternal*, says he to his Heavenly Father, *John* xvii. 3. *that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* After what manner soever we serve God, it is impossible to do it savingly, but in *Jesus Christ*; and therefore, though the *Mahometans* profess to believe in the only true God, and to worship him as the Creator of Heaven and Earth; yet, because they do it not in *Jesus Christ*, it is with good Reason that the *Christians* reckon them in the Number of *Infidels*. The same thing may be said of the *Jews* of our Times; they know indeed the true God, and pretend that they serve him, according to the Ordinances of *Moses*; but forasmuch as they reject *Jesus Christ*, God likewise rejects them; and his Hand lies heavy upon them to this Day. It is in vain for them to boast that they are the Posterity of *Abraham*, and of those other Holy Patriarchs upon whom God formerly bestowed so many Testimonies of his Favour: In forsaking the Faith of their Forefathers, they are fallen from the Privileges their Forefathers received from God. Though the *Christ*, the Saviour of the World, has been fully revealed to Mankind, that unhappy People continues to disown him with an unconquerable Obstinacy: Whereas on the contrary, their pious Ancestors fix'd the Eyes of their Faith upon him, consider'd him in their Minds as the only Foundation of all their Hopes, and worshipped God in him; though he was not manifested to them in such a Measure, and they could behold him but obscurely in the Ages to come, through the Shadows and Figures of the *Lamp*. For though they had not the same Degree of Revelation which we enjoy, yet they could not but perceive that it was in the *Messias*, or the *Christ*, they were to serve God, if they would do it acceptably. And the same Mark of Infidelity must be set upon the *Ari-*

ans, Socinians, and Unitarians of our Days; ¹ who though they pretend to own and worship God the Father, yet will not acknowledge *Jesus Christ* to be the most High God. Wherefore to convince them of their Error herein, and to put a Stop, as much as in me lies, to this growing Heresy, ² which begins to rage in the very Sanctuary; I have chosen these Words to be the Subject of our present Meditation, wherein his eternal Godhead is evidently set forth: *In the Beginning was the Word*, says the Evangelist, *and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

I shall cast what I have to say hereupon into these three Propositions, as they are contained in the Text, and in the same Order they lie in there, viz. 1. That the Word was in the Beginning; 2. That the Word was with God; 3. That the Word was God.

As to the first Proposition, we must enquire, 1. What is meant by the *Word*, which is the Subject of all the Three, and requires some Explication: And, 2. What we are to understand by the *Beginning*, which is so much misunderstood and misapply'd by the Enemies of our Saviour's Divinity. Now as to the Term of the *Word*, that Distinction of ³ S. *Austin*, between the Word of *Jesus Christ*, and the Word which is *Jesus Christ*, is very proper in this place; for S. *John* does not speak here of the Word of *Jesus Christ*, which is contained in the Gospel, and was preach'd by himself and his Apostles, and is still daily to us by their Successors in the Ministry: ⁴ But of *Jesus Christ* himself, though he is the only one amongst the Writers of the New

¹ Clendon, Whiston, passim. Emlin's Enquiry, pag. 4. 9. Cum multis aliis.

² Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 9. Idem, Append. p. 145. sub finem.

³ August. in Psalm. 119.

⁴ Whiston's Vol. IV. p. 112, 113. N. B. p. 158. N. B.

Testament, at least in this absolute manner, who gives him that Name. Besides the Passage we are upon, he uses it, *ver. 14. of this Chapter; The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us*; where it can be referr'd to no other than *Jesus Christ*. Likewise *1 John, v. 7. There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.* But particularly, *Rev. xix. 11, 12, 13.* where he shews us clearly how it belongs to him, and how August a Name it is: *I saw Heaven opened, says he, and behold, a white Horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in Righteousness he doth judge and make War. His Eyes were as a Flame of Fire, and on his Head were many Crowns; and he had a Name written that no Man knew but himself: And he was cloathed with a Vesture dipt in Blood; and his Name is called, The Word of God.* Whereby you see, that the Apostle and Evangelist, describing in a sublime Manner the Majesty of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, gives him that Name of the *Word of God*, as the most Divine, and the most proper to set forth his Glory. But it is a *Name*, *S. John* tells us, *that no Man knows but himself*; and therefore, I hope, the Reader will easily pardon me, if I speak but very imperfectly of it; it is the Name of *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; as it there follows, *ver. 16.*

We must not then fancy, as the *Socinians* do, that *Jesus Christ* is thus called the *Word*, or the *Word of God*; because he has declared to us the Will, or Word of his Father. For admitting him, for Argument-sake, to have been his Father's Envoy in their Sense; was it ever known, that any Author, either Sacred or Prophane, stiled an Ambassador his Word on whose part he spake? If he were so named upon that Account, the Appellation would belong to him in the Quality of Prophet; and consequently might be given to the Apostles, and other Dispensers of the Word of God;

God ; for the Titles which he bears on that Score, are often-times apply'd to them in Scripture. *Ex. gr.* as *Jesus Christ* says of himself, *I am the Light of the World*, John viii. 12. so tells he his Disciples, *You are the Light of the World*, Matt. v. 14. But they are no where called the Word of God, or the Word of *Jesus Christ*, tho' they spoke in his Name.

It is therefore in another Sense that *Jesus Christ* is term'd here the *Word*, simply ; or the Word of God, as in the fore-cited Place of the *Revelation*. It is his proper Title, as he is the Second Person in the Glorious Trinity, considered precisely in himself, without regard to the Humane Nature. There are Names indeed whereby he is denoted as God and Man together ; as those of *Jesus, Christ, Mediator, Redeemer*, and the like ; which are to be met with in both Testaments : But this of the *Word*, or the Word of God, is peculiarly adapted to express his Divine Nature. It is true, that in that Passage of the *Revelation*, he is named the *Word of God*, without excluding his Humanity ; but yet it is as certain, that *S. John's* chief Aim there is to set forth his Divinity. He mentions his Humanity, but as a bloody Vesture wherewith he had covered himself ; *he was clothed*, says he, *with a Vesture dipt in Blood* : But he displays his Divinity in its full Lustre ; which appears more plainly in the Place whence our Text is taken : For there the Evangelist, speaking only of the Second Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity, uses no other Appellation than that of the *Word* : *In the Beginning was the Word*, tells he us, *and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. But after he has declared the Union of that Word with our Flesh ; after he has said, *the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us* ; he alters his Style, and mentions no more the Name of the *Word*, but those of *Jesus* and *Christ*. It is a Name then that denotes particularly the Son of God, considered abstractedly in the Divine Trinity, wherein

wherein he is the Second Person; which distinguishes him from the other Two, viz. from the Father, and the Holy Ghost; and explains to us, as far as so great a Mystery can be to our weak Minds, how the Son is begotten from all Eternity of the Father.

To apprehend this, we must take Notice, that the Word of Man may be consider'd two different ways, viz. either in respect of the Sound it is attended with, or of the Sense it contains. The Sound comes from the Body, and the Sense proceeds from the Spirit: The Sound is heard by our Ears, and the Sense is understood by our Spirit. It is in respect of Man's Word, consider'd the latter way, that the Son of God is thus named; which I choose to explain to you in the Terms of an eminent Father of the Church, who wrote sixteen hundred Years ago, rather than mine own; the Matter being somewhat nice, and his Authority of more Weight than I can pretend to. *There is no Spirit, says he, without Word, nor Word without Spirit; but the Spirit produces in himself the Word, or Logos; and the Logos or Word shews forth the Spirit wherein he was born. The Spirit is, as it were, the Word or Thought dwelling and resting in itself; and the Word is nothing else, but the Spirit coming out of himself. The Spirit of him who speaks passes into his Word; and the Word passes into the Spirit of him who hearkens to him. So that the Spirit, having his Being of himself, is, as it were, the Father of the Word; and the Word is, as it were, the Son of the Spirit, whence he draws his Being. It is impossible that the Word should be before the Spirit, and that it should subsist out of the Spirit, or separated from him; for it is produced by the Spirit, as being his Bud. It is even so, says the Holy Bishop, with the Father, and the Son. The Son comes*

from the Father, but without being separated from him, no more than our Thought is separated from our Spirit. Our Thought, though we impart it to others, remains still in us; so the eternal Son, though he imparts himself to us, remains still in his Father. The Spirit begins to act, and to conceive Thoughts, as soon as he begins to be; and therefore God, in whom to be, and act, is one and the same thing, being from all Eternity, has likewise from all Eternity begotten his Son. And as our Thought is the Image of our Spirit, so the Son is the Image of the Heavenly Father; *he is the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person.* In communicating our Thoughts to other Men, we make ourselves known to them; and the Heavenly Father has made himself known to us, in revealing to us his Son; *for no Man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* This Spiritual Generation of the Thought, and of the Word in our Spirit, is more proper to give us some Knowledge of the eternal Generation of the Son of God, than the Generation of the Children of Men would be. We must not therefore wonder that *S. John* has chosen rather to use here the Appellation of the *Word*, than of the *Son* of God.

This is the Meaning, as far as it can be explained, of that Expression of *S. John*, the *Word*, or the *Word of God*, according to the Opinion of a Primitive Father and Bishop; which, as it suits every way with the Intention and Doctrine of the Evangelist and the Apostle, or rather the Divine by Eminency, so our Adversaries are much in the wrong, to labour as they do, to distort it to another Sense, under Pretence that it was New and Extraordinary, and derived from the *Platonists*,

‡ Clendon's *Traité de Personà*, chap. 2. p. 48. to the End.

For, not to say at present that there is here a plain Allusion to the first Chapter of *Genesis*, wherein God is represented as speaking, and creating the World by his *Word*; those that have studied the Hypotheses of the Ancient *Hebrews*, know very well, that they took the *Face* of God, the *Majesty* of God, the *Glory* of God, the *Wisdom* of God, and the *Word* of God, for one and the same thing. The *Chaldee* Paraphrase, and other Writings, understand these Expressions as Synonymous Terms: And whereas there is Word for Word in the *Hebrew*, Psal. cx. 1. *The Lord said unto my Lord*; the Paraphrast renders it, *The Lord said unto his Word*, as to a distinct Person; and in a Multitude of other Places, which it is needless to mention. The Truth is, the *Jewish* Doctors, in the Time of the *Old Testament*, call'd the *Son* sometimes the *Wisdom*, and sometimes the *Word* of God, and thereby understood a Divine Person: And in the Days of the Apostles, the *Hebrews* acknowledg'd, that that *Word* whereof *Moses* speaks, was the Image of the most High God, and Man the Image of the Word. They named that Word the Son of God, his First-born Son: They styled it the Origine of the Creatures, the Word of God, the Image or Pattern upon which Man was made. And they used to say, that he that could not raise himself up to the Meditation of God, ought to ascend at least to that of his Image, which is the most Sacred Word: ¹ All which stands upon good Authorities, if any one doubts it. And it consequently proves that the Name of the Word, or of the Word of God, given by *S. John* to our Blessed Saviour, was not New, or Extraordinary, or derived from the *Platonists*, as our Adversaries pretend.

¹ Wisdom of Sol. Ecclesiasticus, Philo, & alii.

As to the other Expression of the *Beginning*, *In the Beginning was the Word*, says our Evangelist; what we are to understand by it: I answer, that it can signify no other than the Beginning of the World: So that *in the Beginning* must denote, when Time began to be, or flow; when created Things began to appear or exist; when the World was first created; when nothing could be conceived before, but God and Eternity. If there be an Allusion made here to *Gen. i. 1. In the Beginning God created the Heaven, and the Earth*, as, I think, it is pretty plain by all the Circumstances of the *Discourse* there is; then *S. John* may very well be supposed to mean the same thing as *Moses* does; and that is the Beginning of the Creation, by the very Confession of all our Adversaries. But the general Exposition of the Words, when they are thus absolutely laid down in the several Places of Scripture where they are to be met with, must needs determine them to this Sense. And therefore when it is said, as *John viii. 44. that the Devil was a Murderer from the Beginning*; all Interpreters agree in understanding it of the Beginning of the World: Where we find it, as *Matth. xix. 4. that he which made them in the Beginning, made them Male and Female*; none doubts, but it ought to be so taken. In short, in all these Passages, and the like; *In the Beginning it was not so: Thou, Lord, in the Beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth; ye have known him that is from the Beginning; the Devil sinneth from the Beginning*; and in many more, which it would be superfluous to repeat here, the several Expositors concur in this self-same Acceptation of the Beginning, however they may differ in other Points for the Beginning of all things. And indeed the Expression, so generally laid, would become unintelligible, if it should be used in another Sense; the natural Impression of the Words not admitting it, or rather standing directly against it.

But

But notwithstanding this, the ¹ Socinians will needs have it, that by the *Beginning* here, S. John means the *Beginning* of the *Gospel*; so that they are willing to own that the *Word* was in the *Beginning*, i. e. in the *Beginning* of the Evangelical EOconomy, or when the *Gospel* began to be dispensed; and thereupon tell us that *Jesus Christ* was then God, in their Sense, and shew'd himself so by the Miracles which he wrought. They would do well to inform us exactly at what Point of Time they fix this *Beginning*; whether at his Conception or his Birth, or within the thirty Years of his private Life, or at his Baptism, and when he began to exercise his Ministerial Function; for then we should know where to have them, which we cannot now. But let that be as it will, I think we may safely affirm in the mean while, not only that such an Interpretation must be false, being contrary to the Doctrine of Scripture, as we have already seen in some measure, and shall see more in what follows; but also inconsistent with the Style of the Holy Penmen, who represent the Period of the Manifestation of the *Gospel*, and of *Jesus Christ* in the *Flesh*, as the last Times; nay, as the Fulness of Time. And to give one Instance of it in each, the Prophet *Joel*, speaking of this very Dispensation, wherein the Holy Ghost was to descend chiefly upon the Apostles, has these Words, *Joel* ii. 28, 29. *And it shall come to pass afterward, or in the last Days, as S. Peter rehearses it, Acts* ii. 17. *that I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall prophesy; your old Men shall dream Dreams, your young Men shall see Visions. And also upon the Servants, and upon the Handmaids in those Days, will I pour out my Spirit. When the Fulness of the Time was come, says S. Paul, Gal. iv. 4. God sent forth his Son, made, or born of a Woman.*

¹ Fratres Poloni in Locum.

It is true indeed, as our Adversaries alledge, that *Jesus Christ* shewed himself GOD by the Miracles which he wrought, during the Days of his Ministry; as I presume they mean, being true of no other Interval since his taking upon him our Nature. He gave then, it must be confess'd, authentick Proofs of his Divinity, by restoring the Blind to their Sight; by making the Lame walk, the Deaf hear, and the Dumb speak; by healing the Sick, and raising the Dead; and by commanding the Winds, the Sea, and the Devils themselves. Being the Master of Nature, he might fill all *Judea* with his miraculous Works. But it cannot be fairly inferr'd thence, that he was not God before: He was as much so during the thirty Years of his private Life, which he pass'd in the House of his reputed Father; at the Time of his Birth, and of his Conception; at the Beginning of the World; nay, a great while before, even to all Eternity backward. And though Men beheld his Glory, *the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father*, as our Evangelist expresses it, *ver. 14. in the Days of his Flesh*, yet this cannot properly be called the Time of his shewing himself God, but rather a Servant. For from the Moment of his Birth, and his coming into the World, to the Hour of his Death, and his going out of it; his whole Life, excepting those few Glympses of Majesty, which he gave upon extraordinary Occasions, was nothing but a perpetual Stage of Contempt, Poverty, and Misery. To which we may add, that *Jesus Christ* did no considerable Miracles, till after he had appeared visibly in a State of Humiliation: For it was but after he had been at his first seeing the Light laid in a Manger, after he had escaped the Fury of a cruel Tyrant who thirsted after his Blood, after he had been forced to fly into *Egypt*, after he had been bred in the obscure Town of *Nazareth*, and after he had laboured, as it may be supposed, thirty Years with his own Hands in a *Carpenter's Shop*; that he exercised his Ministry, which lasted

lasted but about three. If then *Jesus Christ* shewed himself God, only by the miraculous Works which he wrought, he could not be so in the very Beginning of the Evangelical Dispensation, i.e. at the Preaching of his Forerunner, *John the Baptist*; which is directly against what our Adversaries generally maintain.

Having thus cleared the Way, by explaining what is meant by the *Word*, and the *Beginning*; I think I may now proceed to assert the Truth of my first Proposition, viz. That the *Word*, i. e. *Jesus Christ*, was in the *Beginning*, i. e. in the Beginning of the World, and consequently from all Eternity; for there was then nothing but Eternity, wherein he might be said to exist. *S. John* delivering this positively and plainly, there seems to be no need to enlarge any farther upon it, or to multiply Texts of Scripture to prove the same thing. But because our Adversaries put their false Glosses upon some of the chief Passages wherein our Saviour's Pre-existence before his Incarnation is fully declared; and particularly the *Arians*, though they admitt that he was in the Beginning of the World, and even before the Creation of it, yet will not allow that he existed from all Eternity; I must endeavour to remove their Cavils, and to make out this Article by these three Degrees, viz. 1. That *Jesus Christ* was before *John the Baptist*; 2. That he was before *Abraham*; 3. That he was from all Eternity; which will take in the full Sense of the Proposition. As to the first Point, we have the express Testimony of the *Baptist* himself; *This is he of whom I said*, says he, seeing our Lord coming unto him, *After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me; for he was before me*; *John* i. 30. This is so very plain, that I can only wonder here how the *Socinians* came to understand by the Beginning, the Time of *John the Baptist's* Preaching;

¹ Whiston's Hist. Pref. Append. p. 141. Mr. Thackh. Depos. Idem, Vol. 4. Art. 6. p. 112. to 159. & passim.

since he both preach'd and was born before *Jesus Christ*, and consequently was before him in these respects; whereas *Jesus Christ* is said there to be before *John*: It must be therefore with relation to his Divine Pre-existence. As to the second Point, we have no less than our Blessed Saviour's own Asseveration, in the famous Dispute he had with the *Jews* about this very Matter: *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, tells he them, *John* viii. 58. *before Abraham was, I am*; intimating thereby, that he existed some thousand Years before his Manifestation in the Flesh. And that moreover as God: For it is not, *I was*, but *I am*; alluding to his Name of *Jehovah*. This can by no means be taken in the Sense of our Adversaries, that he was before *Abraham* was *Abraham*, or what is implied in that Name; *i. e.* before he was the Father of many Nations, and that Promise fulfilled in the Conversion of the *Gentiles*. For so the *Jews*, to whom our Lord spoke, and those that lived at that Time, were also before *Abraham*. Nor that he was before *Abraham*, in God's Fore-knowledge and Determination or Idea: For so were all Men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and even every one that has lived since him, was before him too, in the Divine Prescience and Determination of what shall be in Time. Besides that if those *Jews* had believed this to be his Meaning, they would not have thought, as they did, that he talk'd so vainly, or magnified himself so much above them; much less would they have taken up Stones to cast at him. And therefore it must be understood in a proper Sense, that *Jesus Christ* had a real Being before *Abraham*. As to the third Point, I shall alledge but one Passage of Scripture to prove it; but it is such an one, as seems to have been peculiarly designed by the Holy Ghost to celebrate the Existence of *Jesus Christ* from all Eter-

nity, in the most sublime manner, beyond a Possibility of Cavil: And I will presume to say, in a holy Confidence, that if all others failed, this alone would be sufficient to do it. It is contained *Prov. viii. 22, to 31. inclusive*; where *Wisdom*, owned by the *Jews* to be the *Son of God*, as I intimated before, and by all *Christians* hitherto, except a late *Author*, to be a *Divine Person*, subsisting of itself, displays its eternal Existence thus: *The Lord possesses me in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of old. I was set up from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was. When there were no Depths, I was brought forth, when there were no Fountains abounding with Water. Before the Mountains were settled; before the Hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the Fields, nor the highest Part of the Dust of the World. When he prepared the Heavens, I was there; when he set a Compass upon the Face of the Depth; when he established the Clouds above; when he strengthened the Fountains of the Deep; when he gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment; when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him: Rejoicing in the habitable Part of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men. To which may be added, by way of Confirmation, that Prayer of Jesus Christ to his Father, John xvii. 5. O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was. What can be more fully and nobly express'd? And who, but obstinate *Arians* or *Socinians*, will resist so much Light?*

And so I pass to the Consideration of my second Proposition, viz. That the Word was with GOD. Wherein the *Socinians* are so wedded to their Hypothesis, that rather than depart from it, they will invent, and obstinately maintain the strangest Expo-

¹ Clendon's *Traité de Personà*, pag: 47.

sition of this Clause in the Text. And therefore they tell us, for the most part of them, that by the *Word's* being *with God*, we must understand that he was known to God alone. But what an odd Explanation is this? How contrary to the natural Import of that Expression! And where is there an Example of such an Interpretation in the whole Body of Scripture? It is true, they alledge a Passage of our Author, 1 *John* i. 2. wherein it is said, that *eternal Life was with the Father, and was manifested unto us*; which implies, as they pretend, that it was known to the Father. But what Ground is there to think, that *eternal Life was with the Father*, signifies that it was *known* to the Father, or known to the Father alone? Is it any way credible, that S. *John* would intimate there of eternal Life, only what may be affirmed of eternal Death, of Sin, of the Devils? All which were in this Sense with God from all Eternity, since from all Eternity they were known to God alone. Besides that there is a great Difference between speaking thus of a *Thing*, and a *Person*; as if we should say, *The Gospel was with God*, and *Jesus Christ was with God*; these two Expressions would in the Sense be very different.

Let us keep then to the plain obvious Meaning of Scripture, where we have no reason to suspect a Figure: And since our Evangelist tells us expressly, that *the Word was with God*; understand we it, that he existed, or subsisted with God, since he speaks of a Divine Person. Whereby we are let in some Measure into the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and discover two distinct Persons in it, *viz.* that of God the *Father*, with whom the *Word* was; and that of God the *Son*, who was likewise God, as it follows immediately; and was the *Word*, with whom consequently the Father was. For he who is with one, is not he with whom he is, and *vice versâ*; but must of necessity be another than he. It can never be affirmed, allowing for the Comparifon, that because I am with

Peter,

Peter, I am *Peter*: I am a Man as well as he, and have the same Nature with him; but he is one Person, and I am another.

Which will more plainly appear, and will give us a farther Insight into the Matter of this great Mystery, if we compare this Beginning of *S. John's Gospel* with that of *Moses's Genesis*, to which I have said it alludes, as will more evidently be seen by the Comparison itself; and if we explain the one by the other. There then *Moses* relates to us the *first* Creation, or the Formation of the World; and here *S. John* describes to us the *second*, i. e. the Redemption of Mankind; or, to speak more strictly, ushers it in by what he thought necessary to premise, viz. the Divine Origine of *Jesus Christ*; and therefore both the one and the other begin their Account in the same Manner. *In the Beginning*, says the Historian, *God created the Heaven and the Earth*. *In the Beginning*, says the Evangelist, *was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. To which he adds, *The same was in the Beginning with God*. *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made*. *Moses*, in relating the History of the Creation, ever and anon makes Mention of the *Word* of God, and represents God to us as speaking. *God said, Let there be Light; God said, Let there be a Firmament, or Expansion, in the midst of the Waters; and let it divide the Waters from the Waters: God said, Let the Waters under the Heaven be gathered together unto one Place, and let the dry Land appear: God said, Let us make Man in our Image: And so of the rest*. The sacred Author might have told us simply, that God made the Light; that he made a Firmament in the midst of the Waters; that he made the Waters under the Heaven be gathered together unto one Place; that he made Man in his Image: And so of the rest. But his Intention was to give us Occasion to distinguish in his Discourse, and in the Work of the Creation, him that com-

mands, the *Commandment*, and him that *executes*; i. e. the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*. For it is observable, that both in the Work of the Creation, and of that of the *Rédemption*, there is always the same Order between those three Divine Persons, as between him that commands, the *Commandment* or the *Word*, and him that executes. As the *Word* comes from him that commands, so does the *Son* come from the *Father*. And as he that commands acts by his *Word*, and the *Word* acts by him that executes; so does the *Father* act by the *Son*, and the *Son* by the *Holy Ghost*. The *Word* has the same Authority, as he from whom it comes; it does nothing of itself: It does all that he that commands does. So has the *Son* the same Authority as the *Father*; *he does nothing of himself*, as he tells us *John v. 19. but what he sees the Father do: And what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise*. He that commands, sends the *Word*; and the *Word* sends him that executes. So the *Father* has sent us his *Son*, and the *Son* sends us the *Holy Ghost*. Whereby we see, that *S. John* would insinuate to us here, that our *Lord Jesus Christ* is that eternal *Word*, whereof *Moses* speaks, *Gen. i. that Word of the Lord*, by which *the Heavens were made*, *Pf. xxxiii. 6*. And not only so, but that *Divine Wisdom*, which *the Lord possessed in the Beginning of his Way*, as we read *Prov. viii.* and which was by him, as one brought up with him, or a Foster-Child, before his Works of old. And indeed, the *Mystery of the Holy Trinity* was not unknown to the ancient *Jews*, as I have proved in a foregoing ¹ *Discourse*; though it be not so clearly delivered in the *Old Testament* as in the *New*. ² One of their Doctors, *Rabbi Judas Nagid*, says, that there is the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*; and

¹ *Discourse III. on 1 John v. 7.*

² *Vide Du Plessis de la verité de la Rel. Chrét. Chap. 6. & Jac. Cap. not. in locum.*

that *the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God*: Three in one, and one in three. Which appears in several other Passages, wherein the *Jewish* Doctors speak of the *Word* of God, as of a Person distinct from the Father. *Philo* particularly tells us, that *there are two Firsts*, viz. *God*, and the *Divine Word*; and that *the Word dwells with the Father*: Which is in a manner the same thing with what *S. John* says here, that *the Word was with God*.

But if this Exposition is thought to be too close and nice, and others will understand this Clause simply of the Existence of the Word with God; so that by the *First* he was in the *Beginning* of the World, and by this *Second* he was *before* that from all Eternity with God; I shall not contend about it. But then I hope, that having fully proved this Point of the eternal Existence, or Subsistence of *Jesus Christ* with the Father, upon my former Head; as I farther intend in another *Discourse* to the same effect, to which I refer the Reader; I shall be dispens'd with from speaking any more to it here; and the rather, because it falls in again, at least by way of necessary Consequence, with the third Proposition I am now come to consider, viz. That *the Word was God*.

After what has been said on the first Proposition, That *the Word was in the Beginning*, i. e. in the Beginning of the World; and on the Second, That *the Word was with God*, i. e. from all Eternity; one would think this should be admitted, as the natural Inference of it, without any farther Controversy. For what could it be else but God, or the *Word*, viz. *Jesus Christ*, as I have explained it, that could thus exist in the Beginning, or subsist with God in this manner? Can any other Being be conceived at, and before the Creation of all things; *before any thing was*

made, that was made, as *S. John* expresses it, either in Heaven, or in Earth, or under the Earth? This, viz. that the Word was God, I might here confirm by Arguments drawn from the Names of *Lord*, besides that of God here, and others, which are given *Jesus Christ* in the New Testament; and the several ones answering thereunto, particularly the incommunicable one of *Jehovah*, which are found in the Old Testament, and are likewise given to him, and that in several places. I might also confirm it by the Attributes of God, both incommunicable and communicable, which are ascribed to *Jesus Christ* in Scripture; the Incommunicable, as Eternity, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, &c. the Communicable, which as to their Nature, doubtless as to their Degree, are likewise Incommunicable to the Creature; as Goodness, Wisdom, Justice, Mercy, and the like. To which I might add the Divine Works of the Creation of the World, and the Preservation of all things; the Mission of the Holy Ghost, Miracles, &c. which are attributed to *Jesus Christ* in the same manner. And lastly, the God-like Honours of believing in him, being baptized in his Name, worshipping him, &c. which are ascribed to him, and we are commanded to pay him. But the Truth of the Proposition standing good upon the bare Authority of the Evangelist, who delivers it expressly; and these things being already done for the Confirmation of it, as far as is necessary, in the ¹ *Discourse upon Baptism in the Trinity*, to which Recourse may be had: ² I choose rather to take off here the false Glosses of our Adversaries, wherewith they endeavour to put a wrong Sense upon the Term of God. And because, though the *Arians*, *Unitarians*, and *Socinians*, whatever they pretend to the contra-

¹ *Discourse IV. on Matth. xxviii. 19.*

² *Whiston's Vol. 4. p. 98. N. B. p. 102. N. B.*

ry, do conspire together in denying the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, in its proper and natural Meaning; yet these last lay the higher Claim to Reason, as it must be confess'd their System is the more judicious and consistent; I shall chiefly apply myself at this time to confute them.

These Men then tell us, 1. that the Appellation of God is not the Name of an Excellency or Dignity of *Nature*, but of an Excellency or Dignity of *Office*; and that therefore *Moses* and the Magistrates are called *Gods* in Scripture; whereby they think to elude this, and the other Passages, wherein *Jesus Christ* is so styled. But who has taught them this Distinction? Where have they learn'd it? I believe, setting aside what false Notions Flattery or Superstition may have inspired into Mens Minds, I might safely appeal herein to the Conscience of any one, whether upon hearing the Term of *God*, they do not constantly understand by it a Nature superlatively exalted above all other things, a first Being independent of all others, and of which all others depend? It is plain, *Moses* and the Prophets gave the *Israelites* thereby no other Idea, than of a Nature infinitely perfect in itself, in all they delivered to them concerning the true God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, Master of Angels and Men, the Object of their Fear and Worship. As to *Moses's* being called *God* in Scripture, the Text, which is *Exod. iv. 16.* is a little misrepresented: For it is there, *Aaron shall be thy Spokesman unto the People; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a Mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God; not thou shalt be to him God.* The Meaning whereof is only this, as it is evident from the Context, that there would be nigh the same Relation between *Moses* and *Aaron* upon that Occasion, as is between God and a Prophet whom he sends: As God dictates to the Prophet what he is to

say, and the Prophet speaks it; so should it be between *Moses* and *Aaron*. And as to the Magistrates being likewise called *Gods* there, viz. *Pf. lxxxii. 6. I have said, ye are Gods*; it is by the same Figure, upon the Account of some Analogy they bear to God, in the governing of their Subjects with a Sovereign Authority under him, as he does all the World above them. The Verse immediately following, if there were nothing else, shews what sort of Gods they are; *Ye shall die like Men*. But it is observable, that the Word in the Original is *Elohim*; a Word which is not so peculiar to God as the others, since it is likewise given to the Angels; a Plural Word, which is rather an *Appellative* than a *Proper Noun*. Let them shew me where the Name of *God* in the Singular Number is apply'd to any Creature, and they say something to the Purpose.

But, 2. As a Consequence of this Assertion, the *Socinians* would make us believe that *Jesus Christ* is term'd *God*, not in a *proper* but a *figurative* Sense; and that because he represented God, and all was Divine in his Ministry; and as some of them add, he was destin'd to a Power and Glory wholly supernatural. This were somewhat, I must confess, if they could turn to any Place in Scripture where *Jesus Christ* is call'd God, which ought to be taken figuratively or metaphorically; they might then with some Colour insist upon those Passages concerning *Moses* and the Magistrates, because it would shew that such a Metaphor is not absolutely strange and unheard in the Sacred Style: But it is certain, there is no Ground to suspect a Figure in any of those Places where he is so called. What Metaphor is there to be suspected in that of *Acts xx. 28.* where *S. Paul* says, that *God hath purchased the Church with his own Blood*, speaking of our Saviour? What Figure can there be in that of the same Apostle, *Rom. ix. 5.* where he says, that *Christ is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen*? Or in that of his Epistle to *Titus*,

Titus, where he says, ii. 13. that we look for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; with many others to the same effect? And as to Jesus Christ's being term'd God, because he represented him, though many Men have done so since the Beginning of the World; we do not find that any of them were ever term'd God in the Singular Number, as our Lord is here: No, not Moses himself, who represented him in a very special Manner, and was his Ambassador to Pharaoh King of Egypt, for the Deliverance of his People. As to his being term'd God, because all was Divine in his Ministry; so was all Divine in the Ministry of the Apostles, especially if compared with that of the Prophets. They preach'd, as himself did, Life and Immortality; so that if he was call'd God upon that Account, they had the same Pretence to that glorious Title. As to his being term'd God, because he was destin'd to a Power and Glory wholly supernatural, the Apostles wrought the same Miracles as he did, and perhaps greater in Number: And yet we do not read in the Writings of the New Testament that any of them, no more than Moses, or any of the Prophets in those of the Old, were ever called Gods: On the contrary, they rejected all Divine Honours with Indignation, when they were offer'd them; as S. Paul and S. Barnabas did in an eminent Instance at Lystra, when the Priest of Jupiter, with the People, would have done Sacrifice unto them.

Having thus made good the three Propositions which I propos'd to discourse upon, and so explain'd and vindicated my Text against the false Glosses of its several Adversaries, the Enemies of our Blessed Saviour's Divinity; it remains that I add a Word or two of Exhortation, and then conclude.

And to begin by those who have given Occasion to the present Controversy, which always caused a great Disturbance in the Church, if the Word, i. e. Jesus

Jesus Christ, as I have shew'd him to be, was in the Beginning of the World; let the *Socinians*, laying aside their Prejudices and their groundless Notion of an uncertain Beginning of the Evangelical Dispensation, which they are at a loss where to fix, fairly own it, and acknowledge his Divine Pre-existence before the time of his Incarnation. If the same Word *Jesus Christ* was with God, *i. e.* existed or subsisted then with him from all Eternity, as it can no otherwise be understood; let the *Arians*, who confess him to have been before the Creation of all Things, talk no more of a Created God, and existing they know not from what Period of Time, if it was not from all Eternity; for there is no *Medium* to be conceived. And if that *Word*, the same *Jesus Christ*, was God, as the Evangelist plainly and without any Figure delivers it; let the *Unitarians*, who stickle so much for one only God, consider him as that most High God, or admitt two; which I hope they will no more than the *Orthodox* do. But as for us, who, rejecting all Arguments of Reason, falsely so call'd, are willing to submit our Faith to the Divine Authority, and by the Grace of God are fully convinced of these three great Truths; let us not only believe in our Minds, but openly confess with our Mouths, that *Jesus Christ* was in the *Beginning*, that he was *with* God, and that he *was* God, as we are taught here. And the better to demonstrate the Sincerity of our Belief, and of our publick Profession, obey we the Command of the Royal Psalmist, *Pf. ii. 12. Kiss me, i. e. worship we, the Son, lest he be angry, and we perish from the Way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their Trust in him*, concludes he. Though our gracious Redeemer is Meekness itself, as we wretched Sinners have all the Reason imaginable to acknowledge; yet he knows how to be angry against obstinate Unbelievers, and such as refuse him the Honour which is due to him.

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He is a Lamb, but he can roar as a Lion: And though this *perishing from the Way*, which is threatened here, referrs chiefly to the Life to come, which is look'd upon as at a Distance; yet it may be understood likewise of those fearful Judgments which he executes on this side the Grave. Hereof we have a remarkable Example in *Pontius Pilate*, who condemn'd him, though he had declared him innocent; and being afterwards banish'd to *Lyons* in *France*, fell into Despair, and kill'd himself: And another in *Julian* the Apostate, who having abandon'd the Christian Religion, became one of its fiercest Persecutors; but being wounded in a Fight with the *Persians*, felt the Vengeance of Heaven, and in his Rage and Torment cry'd out, *Thou hast overcome, O Galilean, thou hast overcome*: To mention no more at present. But *blessed are all they that put their Trust in him*, that worship him, and that own him for their God and Saviour. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant us all to do !





DISCOURSE VI.

Jesus Christ Equal with God.

PHILIPP. ii. 6.

Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God.



THE Office of *Mediator*, wherewith our Lord *Jesus Christ* was invested by his Heavenly Father, in the Fulness of time, and which makes him Head of the Church, is in itself so great and august, that he could never have exercised it, or received it, if he had not been from all Eternity truly *God blessed for ever with the Father*. It was absolutely necessary to that end, not only that he should be Man, to bear the Punishment which Mankind had deserved; but also that he should be God, by his infinite Merit to justify Sinners; *i. e.* to obtain the Remission of their Sins at the Tribunal of the Divine Justice. In order to which,

which, he must be endowed with a sufficient Power to regenerate them, and reform them to God's Image; to destroy the Empire of Death, and overcome the Devil; and in a word, so to over-rule all things here below, as to make them *work together for the Good* and Salvation of the Faithful. And what other than a God could undertake or execute such an Enterprize? What other than such an one, could lay down a full Satisfaction to expiate all the Sins of Mankind, and to disarm the Divine Justice of its hottest Thunderbolts, which it held its Arm lifted up to dart out against them? What other than he, who has *the Heart of Men in his Hand, as the Rivers of Water, and turneth it whithersoever he will*, could change their Affections in such a manner, as to draw them from Evil, and incline them to Good, and consequently regenerate them? What other than he, who form'd the Creature in the Beginning, could reform it, after it was depraved by Sin? What other could overcome Death, and triumph over the Devil, than he, *with whom are the Issues of Life and Death; and who hath reserved that rebellious Spirit in everlasting Chains under Darknesh, unto the Judgment of the great Day?* And lastly, what other could cause *all things to work together for the Good* and Salvation of his Church, than he, to whom all the Creatures submit, and is by them owned for their Creator? Jesus Christ then would not have been fitly qualified to exercise successfully the Office of Mediator between God and Man, if he had not been truly God. And therefore, though the Apostle says here in the Context, in the Verses following, that *he made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men; and that being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross:* Yet he tells us in our Text, that *being in the Form of God, he thought it not Robbery to be equal with God.*

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The Design of *S. Paul*, in the former Part of this Chapter, and his particular Aim in using these Words, being to exhort the *Philippians*, amongst whom it seems there were already some Divisions crept in, to Union and Humbleness of Mind; he employs for that end the most prevailing of all Motives, the Example of our Blessed Saviour's Humiliation and Exaltation. *Fulfil ye my Joy*, says he *Ver. 2. that ye be like-minded, having the same Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind.* Let nothing be done, goes he on *Ver. 3, 4. through Strife or Vain-Glory; but in Lowliness of Mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* Look not every Man on his own things, but every Man also on the things of others. To which he adds, *Ver. 5. Let this Mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* Whereupon follows, *Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men; and being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.* And immediately after, *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name; that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* The Truth is, nothing could be offered more apposite to his Purpose by the Apostle, than this glorious Example. And if Men would answer his Design, and bring along with them an humble Mind, willing to unite in what is written, free from Pride, and an Affectation of Singularity; I say, if Men would come thus prepared into the Disputes, which now scandalously disturb the Peace of this Church, particularly those concerning the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*, we should soon see an End of those Contentions, and our *Jerusalem* at Unity in itself.

The Passage I have chosen to be the Subject of this *Discourse*, as it is one of the most cavill'd at by the Adversaries of our Saviour's Godhead, so it is one of the most formal and express in Scripture against the Hereticks in that Matter, both old and new; as not only setting forth his Divinity, but particularly mentioning his *Equality with God*, which they will by no means allow. And therefore, for our better understanding and vindicating the Sense of it, I shall shew, 1. How *Jesus Christ* was in the *Form of God*. 2. What the *Form* itself is. 3. Wherein his *Equality with God* consists; and all this to confirm the Truth of his Godhead.

As to the first Article, how *Jesus Christ* was in the *Form of God*, viz. before he took upon him the Form of a Servant; I cannot but wonder here above all things, that the Enemies of our Saviour's Divinity should so slightly embrace an Opinion, which is not only impious and blasphemous in itself, but deprives them absolutely of all Hope of Salvation: For if *Jesus Christ* was not God as well as Man, he could not offer a sufficient Sacrifice to satisfy the Divine Justice, and so could not make an Atonement for Sins, which required an infinite Ransom. But setting aside this melancholy Reflexion, I observe, 1. That the Word in the Original *ὁμοῦς*, which our Translators have render'd Being, signifies properly Subsisting, which is a great deal more; and implies not only that *Jesus Christ* was in the Form of God, but also that he subsisted in that Form; not only that he was God, as we shall see anon, but also that he was a distinct Person in the Godhead: And this particular Subsistence of his consists in his eternal Generation, whereby the Son is another Person than the Father, the Father having his peculiar Subsistence, and

the Son his; which *S. Paul* plainly shews, when he subjoins, that *Jesus Christ subsisting in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*: For a Person who is equal with, or like another, is not the same in that respect, but must be distinct; for he would not be equal with, or like it, if he were the same; according to that receiv'd Maxim, *Nullum simile, aut aequale, est idem*; *No Like or Equal is the Same.*

But, 2. taking it as it lies before us in our Bible, that *Jesus Christ* was, or did exist in the Form of God, before he took upon him the Form of a Servant; for the Context is plain in that; it must be either as Man, from some Point of Time, or as God from all Eternity: I think there is no *Medium* in this Case. For as to the antiquated, but ^a lately revived Notion of the *Arians*, of a God-Creature, beginning to be or exist as God at the Point of his first Creation or Production; it is a meer Shift, invented to support a decaying Hypothesis, and implying a Contradiction in the very Idea of a God. If it was then as Man that *Jesus Christ* existed, what need was there that he should be made Man? or that he should be made in the *Likeness of Men*, or should be found in Fashion as a Man, as the Apostle expresses it presently after, and tells us he was? And in what Sense could he be said to be made all this afterwards, if at that time he was already so? It must be therefore as God that he existed, and consequently from all Eternity. Which will best appear, by enquiring into the Nature of this eternal Existence, or of the Eternity of God, which is one of his most essential Attributes, and the very first in the Description of him, in the first of the *Articles* of our Church.

^a Whiston's Vol. IV. p. 77. N. B. p. 115. N. B.

In order to this, and to shew the Absurdity of their Opinion, who assert a God created and existing in Time, we must discover and distinguish the true Eternity from that which is at least improperly so called; for by that means we shall understand how *Jesus Christ*, as God, existed from all Eternity. I observe then, in Sacred and Prophane Authors, three Kinds of Eternity: The first is that which had a Beginning, and shall have an End, as that which is ascribed to any material Being. This certainly is a false Notion of Eternity, and a manifest Abuse of the Word; for it had a Beginning, as all Things but God have, and it shall have an End by its very Constitution; both which are contrary to the Nature of Eternity, strictly so term'd. It goes sometimes no farther than the Life of a Man, which is often but a Minute; but if it should extend to the Duration of a Society of Men, how long may it determine, even before the Conflagration of the World! And yet it is used in Scripture in this Sense; but in respect however of the Continuation of the *Jewish State*, that I may not seem to derogate from the Excellency of that Divine Book; as when God promises the Children of *Israel* to give them the Land of *Canaan* for an Inheritance *for ever*, for an *everlasting Possession*; as he does in several places there. I need not therefore add to this the Eternity of the *Roman Empire*, which its Flatterers complimented it with, wherein they were as much mistaken, as in the Signification of the Word. But we have it with relation to particular Men, *Exod. xxi. 6.* where it is said, that *the Servant who will not leave his Master's House after his seven Years of Service are expired, because he finds himself well there, shall serve him for ever*; which must therefore, with the rest, be understood analogically.

The second kind of Eternity is that which had a Beginning, but shall never have an End, by its Nature, or rather God's special Appointment; as that which is attributed to Immaterial Beings or Spirits. In this Sense, both good and evil Angels, though they had a Beginning, shall have no End; they are eternal *à parte post*, as the School-men express it, and shall subsist eternally, though for a very different Fate; the one to continue for ever Happy, and the other for ever Miserable; and so are the Souls of good and evil Men likewise eternal, and shall subsist eternally, either to enjoy the Beatifick Vision of God, or to be excluded for ever from his Presence. This Eternity had a Beginning, because the Life of these two Orders of Spiritual Beings had one in Time; but it shall never have an End, because it shall be eternally continued in its Doom.

The third kind of Eternity, is that which has neither Beginning nor End, and which can belong to none but God, being an incommunicable and essential Property of his Nature; so that if *Jesus Christ* be God, he must exist from Eternity to Eternity. This is the true Eternity, *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*, as it is farther and fully express'd in the Schools; and it is thus defined there, *viz.* an *Attribute of God*, whereby he is, has been, and will always be the same; according to that of the learned ¹ *Boetius*, *Aternitas est interminabilis vite tota simul, & perfecta possessio.*

Whereby we may see, that to constitute the Nature of a true Eternity, there are four Conditions absolutely necessary, without which it cannot be; all which are found in God, and can be in no other; so that God is properly Eternal, and he alone. The first Condition of a true Eternity is, that it have no

¹ Boet. de Cons. Philos. Lib. 5.

Beginning ; for whatever has begun to be, cannot strictly be called Eternal, it would imply a Contradiction to term it so. Now God had none, as might be proved by several Passages of Scripture ; but for Brevity's sake I shall only instance in two, which prove likewise his Eternity *à parte post*. *Moses* in his Prayer to God, recorded in *Pf. xc.* says to him, *ver. 2. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World; even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.* And *S. John*, considering *Jesus Christ* as God, calls him, *Rev. i. 8. Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come; the Almighty.* Wherein Scripture is so far from being contrary to Reason, as our Adversaries often pretend in this Controversy, that though it may be above it, it agrees perfectly with it. For if God had a Beginning, as they would insinuate, when they dare not absolutely deny *Jesus Christ* to be God, then there must have been some one to give him Being, nothing being its own Cause and Principle ; and consequently there must have been one before him. If there was one before him, who was he ? it could be none but he whom we call God ; and so they must yield the Point. And if he had a Beginning any way, at what time did he begin to exist ? It was not when he created the World, for he was then in Being ; and it could not be before that, for there was then no Time, no Succession *secundum prius & posterius*, of Before and After ; otherwise we must make a Time before the Creation of Time, a Time in Eternity itself : God therefore existed from all Eternity, without any Beginning of Life.

The second Condition of a true Eternity is, that as it has no Beginning, so it have no End ; otherwise it would be an Eternity but on one Part. Now God's Duration shall have no End, from the very Nature of it, and not from any other's Favour or

Appointment. In this respect the Author of *Pf. cii.* tells God, *ver. 25, 26, 27. Of Old hast thou laid the Foundation of the Earth; and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands. They shall perish, but shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a Garment; as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no End.* Which the Author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* applies to *Jesus Christ*, *Heb. i. 10, 11, 12.* considering him as God, in his Quality of Mediator. Eternity is an Abyss, a Bottomless Pit: *A Thousand Years in thy Sight*, says the same *Psalmist* to God, *ver. 4. are but as Yesterday when it is past, and as a Watch in the Night.* Who can set Bounds to the Days of God? or who can measure out his Years? As none gave him Life, so none can take it away from him. Would God destroy himself? that is unnatural to any Being; the supreme Being cannot be reduced into Nothing; who should destroy him? it must be one more Powerful than he, and where is that to be found? what Creature can rise up against him, and prosper? And if any should be so mad as to attempt it against its Creator, what would the Success of it be? he has but to say, Return into your Primitive Nothing, you mortal Creatures; and they must obey the Command of their Creator, and drop immediately into the same. In a word, having in him the Spring of Life, he will always be inaccessible to Death, and drive away the very Prospect of it from himself. God is therefore Eternal *à parte post*, as well as *à parte ante*, for his Duration to come, as well as for that which is past; and so consequently is *Jesus Christ* in respect of his Godhead.

The third Condition of a true Eternity is, that it be a Negation of Duration, strictly so called; and of Succession. It must not be divisible into Periods of Time: There is not so much as First and Last in it, properly speaking, Past or Future; all is Present

in it, and to be perceived by one single Act, if at all. It is always whole and perfect; and it will never possess more than it does already. *There is nothing Past in Eternity*, says in effect very judiciously ¹ *S. Austin*, and *Boetius*; *nor nothing Future*; *because what is Past has ceased to be*; and *what is to Come, has not yet begun to be*: *Whereas Eternity is only what now Is, not what Has been, or what Will be.* Which if it be so, it is not difficult to conceive what the Eternity of God is; for it consists in this, that he has, and does actually possess in one Instant, what he will ever possess. So that we must not imagine, that there is a Flux of Time in it; a Yesterday, or To-day, or To-morrow; these are Parts and Circumstances which cannot be apply'd to Eternity: They are Properties of Time, unworthy of a Being that is all-present, and has the Possession of all. *O my God*, says the *Psalmist*, Psalm cii. 24. *take me not away in the midst of my Days; thy Years are throughout all Generations.* And *Hebr.* xiii. 8. it is *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* To ascribe Duration, properly so termed, or Succession, to Eternity, would be to ascribe it to God; for he is Eternity itself. We must not therefore think that God is more ancient to-day, than he was at the Creation of the World, because there have pass'd near six thousand Years since; there is no Time Past, or to Come, in respect of him: Before the Foundation of the Earth he was God; and was as much eternal as he is, or ever will be. So that God's Eternity is a Negation of Duration, strictly so called, and of Succession.

The fourth Condition of a true Eternity is, that it be always the same: So that what is eternal, admits of no Change or Alteration whatsoever. And therefore God's Eternity does not make him other than he has been, or will be; he is neither the older

¹ *Aug. Lib. 4. de Trinit. c. 1.* *Boet. de Cons. Philos. Lib. 5.*

nor the weaker for it: But he is what he has been from all Eternity; he is all that he will be, and he will never be other than what he has been, is, and ever will be. *Thou art the same, and thy Tears shall have no End*, says the *Psalmist* in the fore-cited Place, in respect of his immutable State. *Jesus Christ the same*, in that to the *Hebrews*, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. And it is this chiefly, that distinguishes Eternity from Time. Time eats out all things, and even itself; it is its old Epithet, *Tempus edax rerum*, *Time the Devourer of Things*: And every Creature being in a perpetual Flux, fades away, and vanishes out of our Sight; the Vicissitude of Seasons wears out the very Stones. The Reason whereof is, that nothing can be subject to Time, and its Vicissitudes, but must be thereby exposed to Change. But Eternity can never decay, it is always in the same vigorous Condition: For if it could change, or alter any way, it would not be Eternity. And therefore God being eternal, he must of necessity be ever the same: It is his Eternity that makes him permanent in the same State; it being certain, that if there were any Change or Alteration in him, any Addition or Diminution, he could not be eternal; because Eternity is the total and perfect Possession of a thing in an instant. Whence it follows, that true Eternity is an Attribute which belongs solely to God, and is incommunicable to the Creature.

It is therefore a gross Error, contrary to the Principles of true Philosophy, and of sound Divinity, to affirm, that the World, or any Creature in itself, is absolutely eternal. It is true, that Spirits and the Souls of Men being Immaterial and Simple, free from Composition, are eternal in their Nature, *à parte post*, i. e. immortal, but not absolutely; it is by God's special Appointment that they are created so,

⁊ Vide *Discourse IV. on Matth. xxviii. 19.*

and not without his particular Concourse upholding them; without which they cannot subsist in Being one Moment. And as to the Material World, it is not even thus eternal, being composed of Parts, which are naturally dissoluble; besides that we know from another hand, that it will have an End at the last Day. But *à parte ante*, no good Christian that believes the Scriptures, will offer to say that the World is eternal; it being contrary to the Revelation God has given us there of its Creation, and particularly the Account of it by *Moses*. And to argue a little from what has been said concerning Eternity; to affirm that the World is eternal absolutely, or *à parte ante*, is to make of it a kind of Deity; because Eternity is a Property which flows from the Divine Essence; and if the World is eternal, it is a Being subsisting of itself, and independent, holding of no other. But besides it destroys the very Nature of Eternity itself, which consists in a Negation of Duration, strictly so called, and of Succession; and in possessing all in an Instant. To clear up this Matter; if the World is eternal, there must be in Eternity a Succession of Time, one Period preceding, and another following: For we see, that the World is older to-day, than it was in the Age of the Patriarchs; and that the farther we go, the more we must add to its pretended Eternity; so many Minutes as flow out, are so many Additions to be made to the Sum total. Now nothing can be added to a true Eternity; it is never longer, or shorter; it subsists, and is infinite in one indivisible Point: It is impossible to give it any new Days, or to put any new Minutes to it. But this happens in this Case of the World, which is more ancient to-day, than it was yesterday; it being ridiculous to say, that Addition adds nothing, and that there are not more Minutes than Days: Which yet must be said, if the World is eternal; since what is eternal is infinite, and that to Infinity nothing can be added. It implies

plies therefore no less than a Contradiction to affirm that the World is eternal; it is the Property of God, who knows no Succession, or Degrees of Duration in his Eternity.

If then *Jesus Christ* was, existed, or subsisted in the *Form of God* from all Eternity, it follows thence, that it could not be as *Man*; it must be therefore as *God*. Which will farther appear, by shewing, 2^{dly}, what the *Form* itself is, as I proposed to do. By the *Form of God* then, *S. Paul* doubtless meant, and we are to understand, the Divine Essence with all its Properties: Not that God, strictly speaking, according to Humane Language, hath a *Form*; the Godhead admitting of nothing material, extended, or compounded. For what Figure or Resemblance can we ascribe unto him? *To whom will ye liken GOD? Or, What Likeness will ye compare unto him?* says *Isaiah*, xl. 18. But the Apostle attributes to him here a *Form* ἀνθρωποπαθός, to accommodate himself to our manner of Speech; wherein by that Word we denote what constitutes a thing, and by which it is known and distinguish'd. So that the *Form of God*, by Analogy, according to the common Use of the Term amongst Men, is what makes God to be God: It is his Essence, and his Nature, by which we know him, and distinguish him from other Beings. And as it is here applied to *Jesus Christ*, it is a natural, essential *Form*, which constitutes him God substantially, exclusively of his *Form of a Servant*, by which he was made *in the Likeness of Men*. Which is evident from the very Context, if there were no other Arguments to prove it, where an Opposition is made between the two *Forms*: And our Lord is said, ὑπάρχειν, to *subsist* in the *Form of God*, as of a natural, essential *Form*; but λαβέν, to *take* upon him the *Form of a Servant*, as of an accidental, external *Form*, superadded to that he was in, or existed in before. Upon which account he is styled, *Coloss.*
i. 15.

i. 15. *the Image of the invisible God*: And *Hebr. i. 3. the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*. And himself assures his Disciples, *John xiv. 9. that he that hath seen him, hath seen the Father*; because, as he had told the *Jews* before, *John x. 30. he and the Father are one*. The Reason of all which is, that they have the same Form, and the same Godhead: Which is put out of all Controversy by that noted Passage, *Coloss. ii. 9. In him, i. e. Jesus Christ, dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily*: Bodily, as it is understood by the best Interpreters, *i. e. really and substantially*, in Opposition to Figure and Resemblance; all the Fulness of the Godhead, not some Portion or Lineaments, but all that is comprehended in the infinite Ocean of the Divinity.

Whence it appears, how grossly the 'Adversaries of our Saviour's Godhead are mistaken in the Sense they give of the *Form of God*, which is here attributed to *Jesus Christ*, interpreting it of an external Figure or Resemblance, according to the Acceptation of it in common Discourse: And thereupon will yield to you, that *Jesus Christ* is *like God*, and *equal with God*; nay, own him to *be God*, and the *Son of God*; but then only in this respect, that he was endued by his Father with excellent Qualities, even above Men and Angels; and possessed a Fulness of Grace, being still however but a Creature. So that according to their Doctrine, he is God but by Participation and Analogy; because there were seen in him some Perfections, during his Manifestation in the Flesh, resembling the Divine: Notwithstanding he is so often called *God* and *Lord* in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, in the Sense those Names naturally carry with them, which are therefore in that respect incommunicable to any Creature; God having expressly declared, that he is

! Sociniani. Whiston passim.

jealous of his Honour, and will not give his Glory to another: And notwithstanding all the Properties of the Divine Essence, not in Word only, but also in Reality, are ascribed to him.

But before I quit this Point, I must not forget to take notice of an Observation of an Eminent Schoolman, upon the Expression of the *Form of God*; which seems to me to be not only curious, but very judicious and solid. And it is this; that “though
“ the Terms of *Essence*, *Nature*, and *Form of God*,
“ signify the same thing amongst the Fathers, as *Damas-
“ mascene* assures us they do, in his *Isagoge*, Cap. 1.
“ yet some Reason may be assigned why the Apostle
“ preferr’d here this latter to the other two. *Es-
“ sence* denotes simply what constitutes a thing, and
“ makes it be what it is; *ex. gr.* the Essence of Man
“ is that which makes him a Rational Animal, and
“ nothing else. *Nature* says somewhat more, and
“ adds to it the natural Properties; *ex. gr.* it is the
“ Nature of Man to be *Risible*, to be capable of
“ Learning, and the like. But *Form* implies, besides
“ Essence and Nature, other Qualities which attend
“ them, and are as Lineaments under which the
“ thing appears: *Ex. gr.* Man who is essentially a
“ Rational Animal, and naturally *Risible*, capable of
“ Learning, &c. bears the Qualities of good, just,
“ handsome. This is his *Form*, which adds some-
“ thing to what he essentially and naturally is”.
According to which Observation, *S. Paul* ascribing
to *Jesus Christ* that he subsisted in the *Form of God*,
would thereby let us know, not only that he was
essentially and naturally God, but also possessed
all the Divine Attributes; as Wisdom, Power,
Goodness, Justice, Mercy, and other Perfections
to him belonging. ² Upon which account he

¹ Danaeus in Lombardum.

² Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 10. Quest. 2.

subjoins, that *he thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, because he had all his Excellencies, as well as his Essence and Nature; which comes now, 3. to be explained and vindicated, according to my proposed Method.

¹ The Apostle, in expressing himself thus, that *Jesus Christ thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, intimates two things to his Honour; one is, ² that in pretending to an Equality with God, he has committed no Act of Usurpation upon his Rights; and in making himself God, has robbed him of no Part of his Glory, to attribute it wrongfully to himself: And the other, that he fully possesses the same Titles ³ and Pre-eminences with his Father, being co-equal with him in all things. As to the first, it is but too certain that the Devil has often-times attempted to pass for God, and to draw in Men to worship him, by that Means to rob him of his Glory; and that he has but too often succeeded in it. And it is no less notorious, that there have been Princes, *i. e.* mortal Men, who have been guilty of the same Insolence, and have endeavoured to cause others to sacrifice and burn Incense to them as to immortal Gods. But this was not the Case of *Jesus Christ*, in taking upon him the Style of God, and claiming all his Prerogatives; it was his indisputable Right, and he wrong'd none in it. The Father himself *bare him Witness*, and gave his Approbation to this Truth; when he said for a Decree, *Psal. ii. 7. Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*; as he likewise declared it, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, *This is my beloved*.

¹ Idem, Vol. IV. p. 86, 87. N. B.

² Chrysost. Hom. 6, 7. in Epist. ad Philipp. cap. 2. Theophyl. Comment in loc.

³ Whiston, Hist. Pref. p. 72. Pos. 3. Idem, Vol. IV. Art. 8. p. 172. to 207. & passim.

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Son, in whom I am well pleased, 1 Pet. i. 17. Which he stood to himself firmly, when the Occasion required it. And therefore when the *Jews* sought to kill him, and took up Stones to stone him for Blasphemy, and saying, that God was his own *Father*, making himself thereby *equal with God*; he constantly persisted in it, as we may see, 1 John v. and x.

And indeed, as to the second thing imply'd in that Expression, that *Jesus Christ thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, viz. ² that he fully possesses the same Titles and Pre-eminences with his Father, being co-equal with him in all of them; it is but mentioning them, to see it plainly verified: To which end we must take Notice, that the Term in the Original, *ἐὶναι ἴσα*, imports, not only that *Jesus Christ is equal with God*, as it is barely translated; but also that all the things which belong to him are equal with God; or that in all Things he is co-equal with him, i. e. all that relate to his Divinity: For as a ³ Learned Man observes, we may understand, *τὰ ἑαυτοῦ*, by an *Ellipsis*, a Figure common to the *Greeks*. He is then not only called God and Lord in Scripture, in the proper and common Meaning of those Names, as they denote a peculiar Excellency by Nature, not Office; ⁴ but all the incommunicable Properties which follow them, and cannot be imparted to the Creature, are ascribed to him; as Eternity, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Immutability, and generally all the Perfections which flow from the Divine Essence. Of every one of which I might give here particular Proofs, if it were necessary, and I had not done it

¹ Whiston's *Vol. IV. p. 175. N. B.*

² Hamm. *N. Test. in Locum.*

³ Camero *in locum.*

⁴ Whiston's *Hist. Pref. p. 72. Pos. 4. & passim.*

elsewhere ; whither therefore I referr the Reader. Whence we may safely conclude, that *S. Paul* had sufficient Reason to say, that *Jesus Christ being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*; since all his Titles and Pre-eminences, his whole Essence, Nature and Form, his whole Glory, and all his incommunicable Attributes, did of right belong to him in all their Perfection.

² But the Enemies of our Blessed Saviour's Godhead being resolved at any rate to destroy this his *Equality with God*, which the Apostle so emphatically delivers, and to bring him down to a *Creature*; or, which comes to the same thing, to make him an inferior and dependent Deity; they set a great Value upon all those Passages of Scripture which seem to have any Tendency that way; and therefore they gather together, and urge with much Earnestness against us, those several Places of the New Testament, wherein *Jesus Christ* is said to *do nothing of himself*, or to *do only the Works which his Father has given him to do*; that *the Father is greater than he*; that *the Son does not know the Hour of the last Judgment, but the Father only*; and that *he is to deliver up the Kingdom to his Father at the End of the World*. Now because they make of each of these, and the like Passages, a distinct Argument against our Doctrine, I think it will not be amiss, if I examine and answer them accordingly; though perhaps one Distinction might be sufficient to unravel and reply to them all.

³ As to the first Argument, whereby they would make *Jesus Christ* a dependent Deity, it consists in this, that he says, *John viii. 42.* that he *proceeded forth, and came from God*; that *as the Father hath*

¹ *Discourse IV. on Matth. xxviii. 19.*

² Sociniani. Whiston passim.

³ Whiston, Vol. IV. Art. 12. p. 220. to 227.

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Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself, John v. 26. that the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; and that the Father sheweth the Son all things that himself doth, John v. 19, 20. and that his Doctrine was not his, but his that sent him, John vii. 16. having not spoken of himself, but as the Father which sent him gave him a Commandment, John xii. 49. But there is nothing in all these Expressions, whence they can fairly infer a Dependency of Jesus Christ as God upon his Father. Besides that the Scripture affords us several Passages wherein he is represented as having Being and Life in himself; as working Miracles by his own Power, and speaking authoritatively of his own Head; particularly that noted one, to mention no more, I will, be thou clean, Matth. viii. 3. And if there seems to be any Clashing between these different Passages, it is easily reconciled by the Distinction of the two Natures in Jesus Christ, the Relation of Mediator, or the Subordination which is between the Father and the Son in their Manner of subsisting; which we admitt.

¹ As to the second Argument, whereby they would overthrow the Equality of Jesus Christ with God, our Lord indeed tells his Disciples, *Joh. xiv. 28. If ye love me, ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I.* But it is plain that he speaks there of himself as *Man*, not *God*. He could not say in any other Sense that he went unto the Father; for he was to be with his Disciples *to the End of the World*, in respect of his Divinity, *Matth. xxviii. 20.* It is then of Jesus Christ considered as *going away*, and consequently as *Man*, not *God*, that we are told there that *the Father is greater than he*; which makes nothing against his Equality with him.

¹ Whiston, Hist. Pref. pag. 12. Quest. 18. Idem, Vol. IV. p. 176. N. B.

¹ As to the third Argument, which is taken from the Son's not knowing the Hour of the last Judgment; it is true, that S. Mark xiii. 32. says expressly, out of our Lord's Mouth, that of that Day, and that Hour, knoweth no Man, no, not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. But allowing Jesus Christ to be God, as I think I have evidently proved it before, it can hardly be doubted but he must be apprized of the Time, and all the other Circumstances of that great Solemnity, at least in that Capacity; though as Man, he might be ignorant of them. To which if we add, what S. Peter told him upon another Occasion, Lord, thou knowest all Things, John xxi. 17. I presume there will appear no Ground for the Objection, to make Jesus Christ inferior to his Father, in Point of Knowledge.

² As to the fourth and last Argument they urge, to make Jesus Christ an inferior and dependent Deity; that he is to deliver up the Kingdom to his Father at the End of the World: It is true, S. Paul seems to imply so much, 1 Cor. xv. 24. where he says, Then cometh the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power. But how many Passages are there in Scripture, which expressly affirm the Eternity of Jesus Christ's Reign? And when thy Days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy Fathers, says God to David, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. I will set up thy Seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy Bowels, and I will establish his Kingdom. He shall build an House for my Name, and I will stablish the Throne of his Kingdom for ever. His Dominion, says Daniel, vii. 14. is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away; and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, says the Angel to Mary, Luke i. 33. and of his Kingdom there shall be no End.

¹ Whiston's Vol. IV. p. 109. N. B.

² Idem, Vol. IV. Art. 17. p. 322, 323.

Besides many others to the same purpose. Now this seeming Contradiction is naturally and easily reconciled, and the Objection removed, by answering that *Jesus Christ* is to deliver up the OEconomical Kingdom to his Father at the End of the World, which he held of him as Mediator, *i. e.* as God and Man together, at least as to the Form and Manner of its Administration: But the essential Kingdom, which he enjoys as God, shall remain, as to the Substance, for ever; which is a Confirmation of his Equality with his Father.

Away therefore from the *Christian* Society such Heretical Monsters, as would degrade our Blessed Saviour into a meer *Creature*, and change the *Form of God*, which he possessed from all Eternity, into the *Form of a Servant*, which he took but in the Fulness of Time; the Glory of him, who is coequal with his Father in all things, into the Condition of a simple Man, who is naturally subject to all manner of Infirmities. It is to very little purpose to compliment him in Words with the Title of *true Son of God*, or even of *God*, and to profess him endowed with eminent Qualities, above Men and Angels; to style him *Lord*; nay, as some of them will venture to do, to *worship* him: If they will not own him to be more than a *Creature*, all this Homage may be downright *Idolatry*. But as for us, who are thoroughly convinced of his eternal Godhead, and his perfect Coequality with his Father, let us sincerely pay him the Adoration which is due to him in that respect; considering, and at the same time admiring, upon whom our Salvation is founded; not upon a simple Creature, or a meer *Man*, but *Jesus Christ, God blessed for ever*, who was willing to put his Hand to the Work, to bring about so glorious an Enterprize. And if our Happiness is thus grounded upon the *Rock of Ages*, who shall be able to destroy it? Though the World, the Devil, and all the Powers of Hell, should

should join all their Forces together to defeat what God has undertaken, it would be all to no purpose; their utmost Efforts must be in vain. But then if *Jesus Christ* is God, and equal with God, it behoveth us to consider seriously what Respect and Obedience we owe him, and how heinous our Crime is, when we are so unhappy as to offend his Divine Majesty. And yet when do we do this? when are we afraid to displease him? Notwithstanding he is a God whom we thus despise, who holds a Thunderbolt in his Hand, and carries his Vengeance with him, and consequently can destroy us to all Eternity, if he pleases. Let us therefore be fearful of affronting him, and provoking his Anger. And since though he was in the *Form of God*, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the *Form of a Servant*, and was made in the *Likeness of Men*, and was found in *Fashion as a Man*, in order to draw nigh to us, and associate with us: Let us go and meet him with a holy Confidence, as one full of Good-Will towards us. It can hardly be express'd how beneficial his Presence will be to us; for what fuller Bliss can there be, than to be conversant with God? In him is the Well of Life, and of all Blessings. The greater he is in himself, the happier shall we be in enjoying him: Being admitted to the Court of so glorious a Monarch, we shall appear there like so many Princes; and having the Honour of attending on him, we shall want nothing to complete our Felicity. And though we follow him here below, bearing his Reproach, and as a God whose Glory is veiled, he will uncover it to us one Day, when he shall come with Power and Splendor to judge the World, and to introduce us, as his elect Children, into the Kingdom, which he has prepared for us from all Eternity. Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant!



DISCOURSE VII.

Jesus Christ the Image of God.

COLOSS. i. 15.

Who is the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of every Creature.



It is almost impossible that the Faithful should reflect, with the least Attention, upon the Humiliation and Miseries, wherein our Lord *Jesus Christ* lived here below during the Days of his Flesh, but their Faith must be shaken with a violent Temptation. How can they consider that he from whom the Gospel bids them expect Deliverance out of all their Evils, and of Death itself began his Life in the most wretched Condition, having for a House only a Stable; for a Cradle only a Manger; for Company, only brute Beasts that he pass'd it in Contempt and Persecution and that he ended it by the most barbarous, cruel and shameful Execution! How can they consi
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der these things, I say, but their Flesh and Blood, naturally blind and unbelieving, must presently cry out, *How shall he save others, who could not save himself?* How should they look to receive from him the infinite Riches of Heaven, who lived in so much Poverty on Earth, that he had not *where to lay his Head!* How should they think, that he would lift them up one Day above the Heavens, and make them Partakers of a Glory like that of the Angels; who whilst he dwelt here below, was *despised and rejected of Men*, and look'd upon by his own Countrymen not as a *Man*, but a *Worm!* The Truth is, to judge of things by Humane Measures, this would be to feed one's self with vain and frivolous Hopes: And so do all Infidels accordingly think it. Whence it comes to pass, that from the Beginning of the Preaching of the Gospel, *Jesus Christ* crucified, who is the Object of our Faith, and the Foundation of all our Expectations, has been *to the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and unto the Greeks Fool shness*; as we have it, 1 Cor. i. 23.

The Apostle therefore, in this Chapter whence our Text is taken, is particularly careful to strengthen the Faithful of *Colosse* against this Scandal of the Cross. He had laid before them *Jesus Christ*, in the Verse immediately preceding, as our only Saviour; as he *in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of our Sins*. But because by mentioning his Blood, he called to their Memory the bloody and ignominious Death which he suffered to redeem us, and all the other Miseries he underwent in doing what was necessary here below for our Salvation; lest the Remembrance, I say, of these things should shake their Faith, who were but newly converted to Christianity, and make them doubt whether he was able to perform what he had promis'd them; *S. Paul* explains to them, in a sublime Style, in this and some of the following Verses, the Glory of him in whom they

had believed. He tells them, that he *is the lively Image of the Heavenly Father*, the Sovereign Lord and Master of all the Creatures; the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; that he is before all things, and that by him all things consist. These are the glorious Titles which the Apostle gives *Jesus Christ* in our Text, and in some of the Verses immediately following; to produce no more at present.

But to proceed methodically, by way of Division; as to the two Titles which are contained in our Text, and are to be the Subject-Matter of this *Discourse*, I lay down that they are two Descriptions of *Jesus Christ*, whereof the first sets him forth by relation to the Heavenly Father; the second, by relation to all the Creatures. In the former respect, he is *the Image of the invisible God*; in the latter respect, he is the *First-born of every Creature*; i. e. as I hope to make it appear, the Lord and Master of all things created, which are in Heaven, or in Earth.

When *S. Paul* tells us in the first place, that *Jesus Christ is the Image of the invisible God*; we must take notice especially, that he puts the Name of God there, to denote particularly the Person of the Father. So he uses it in several Passages of his Epistles; as ex. gr. *1 Cor. vi. 8.* when he says, *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.* And so likewise *Ephes. iv. 6.* *There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Thus also our Saviour himself, *John xvii. 3.* speaks to his Heavenly Father, *This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* The Scripture speaks in this manner for these two Reasons; 1. Because amongst the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, that of the Father is the Principle, and as it were the Spring in the Godhead: And especially, 2. Because in the Work of our Redemption, to which must be referr'd almost all that the Scripture, particularly of the New Testament, teaches us of God, and of whom the

the Apostle speaks here; the three Divine Persons have so divided their Functions between themselves, that the Person of the Father represents the Majesty of God, in commanding what ought to be done; Whilst the Son exercises the Office of a Mediator, interceding with God his Father for Mankind, and communing with them from him; and the Holy Ghost executes that of a Comforter, enlightning us with his Rays, and leading us by his Graces, to bring us to Salvation. But then, when the Father is called God in this Sense, and even the only true God, we must not fancy, as certain both ancient and 'modern Hereticks do, that that is to be understood exclusively of the two other Persons, as if they had not the same Divinity as the Person of the Father. When *S. Paul* said, *1 Cor. ii. 2.* that he *determined not to know any thing among the Corinthians, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;* it was not with a Design to exclude the Knowledge of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost; nor that of the Birth, Life, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord. On the contrary, he rather included these things in the Expression of *Jesus Christ crucified.* And *Acts xvi. 31.* when he and *Silas* said to the Jailor, who being all frightened at the Prodigies he had just now seen, came and ask'd them, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* When, I say, they answer'd him, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House;* they did not intend to exclude from the Object of Faith, either the Father or the Holy Ghost. In like manner, when the Father is called *God, or the only true God;* it is not to exclude from the Godhead either the Son or the Holy Ghost. This Name of God, thus given to the Father, tends meerly to the Exclusion of such as have another than a Divine Essence, as, *ex. gr.* the Angels, Men, and above all the false Gods of the

‡ Sociniani, Whiston's Vol. IV. p. 20. N. B.

Heathens. So that that cannot exclude either *Jesus Christ* or the Holy Ghost, who have so much the same Essence with the Father, that the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; and both the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost. It is evident especially, that it cannot exclude our Lord *Jesus Christ*, against whose Divinity the Hereticks seek for an Argument in the Passage I am explaining, and in some others like it. For he is styled the Son of God after a peculiar manner; and which could not belong to him, if his Essence were different from that of the Father.

The Apostle adds, that that *God is invisible*. And indeed God, considered in himself and in his Nature, is absolutely invisible, since he is a Spirit. But this is said here particularly concerning the Person of the Father, of whom *S. Paul* speaks; as likewise *S. John* i. 18. and v. 37. For as the ancient ¹ Fathers have very judiciously observed, the eternal Father never appeared to any Man. ² He that appeared formerly to the Holy Patriarchs, under the Old Testament, was the Son, who by that means gave then his Church some *Preludiums* of his future Incarnation. So likewise did the Holy Ghost, under the Evangelical Dispensation, appear under the Form of a Dove, at the Baptism of *Jesus Christ* by *John* the Baptist; and afterwards on the Day of *Pentecost* to the Apostles, under the Figure of cloven Tongues, like as of Fire. But the Father never took any visible Form: He was then always invisible in all respects; whereas the two other Persons of the Blessed Trinity, though invisible in themselves, made themselves visible in some manner, upon certain Occasions; notwithstanding what a ³ late Author says to the contrary.

¹ Just. Mart. Iren. & alii.

² Vide Just. Mart. Apol. 1. Iren. lib. 4. c. 23.

³ Clendon's *Traité de Personà*, pag. 211.

And here by the way I cannot but take notice to you, that *S. Paul* teaching us, as he does in this and several other Places, that God is invisible; he thereby manifestly confutes the Error of those of the *Romish* Communion, who paint the Godhead, and bedeck their Churches with Images of it, in order to worship them. I speak not now of the Images or Statues of the He-Saints and She-Saints, which they make, and daily fall down before: A detestable Idolatry, fit for nothing but to inspire into the *Jews* and the *Mahometans* an insuperable Aversion to the *Christian* Religion! I mean only the Images of the Holy Trinity, whereof they paint all the three Persons; the Father in the Form of an old Man, the Son in that of a Lamb, and the Holy Ghost in that of a Dove; and which they bow down to. One would think, these Men were obstinately resolved to imitate throughly the Practice of those miserable *Gentiles*, whom the Apostle upbraids, *Rom. i. 23.* that they had *changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beasts.* For which Reason some of the most Eminent amongst them, though otherwise zealous Assertors of Images; as Schoolmen, Bishops, and even Popes, have absolutely condemned those of the Trinity. At the Conference of *Poissi*, holden between Papists and Protestants, five of the most celebrated Doctors on the Popish side said openly, that they desired the Images of the Trinity might be entirely taken away out of the Temples, and all other Places, both Publick and Private; as being forbidden by the Holy Scriptures, the Councils, and many excellent Men in Learning, and Piety. And indeed how can they paint him, who is invisible? And how dare they undertake it? Anciently, *Alexander* the Great forbid any Man to draw his Picture; unless

‡ Vide *Daille* des Images, Liv. 4. Chap. 8.

it were *Apelles*, who was the most excellent Limner of his Time. But God never gave such a Leave to any one: He has drawn himself in *Jesus Christ*, who is, as *S. Paul* tells us here, *the Image of the invisible God*.

This Expression being capable of two Interpretations, the Commentators are divided in their Opinions about it; but yet so, that they are agreed in understanding it to be a plain Proof of the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*. 1. The one apply it to him, as considered in his Divine Essence; and alledge, that he is the eternal Image of the eternal Father; because he has in him, in respect of that his Father, all that is necessary to render an Image perfect and complete. And, 1. An Image ought to be like its Original: For if it be unlike it, it does not resemble it, and consequently cannot be its Image. 2. It must draw its Origine, at least in some manner, from what it is to represent: For a simple Resemblance between two things, is no sufficient Ground to affirm, that the one is the Image of the other. Though two Drops of Water, are as like one another as can be, we shall never say, if we will speak properly, that the one is the Image of the other. 3. An Image must represent either the Essence and Nature of the thing, and then it is an essential or natural Image; in which Sense we say of a Son, who resembles his Father, that he is his Image: Or it must at least represent its Figure or Outside, and then it is an artificial and accidental Image; in which Sense we say, that the Figure which is stampt upon Coin, is the Image of the Prince. These three Conditions suit perfectly with *Jesus Christ*, considered in himself, and in his Divine Nature: So that he is the eternal, invisible, essential Image of his Father; and such an Image as existed before there were any Creatures to contemplate it. For, 1. he is like his Father, being equal to him in all things; *God blessed for ever* with him, as the Scripture teaches us in several Places. 2. He draws this Resemblance from his Father, of whom he was be-
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gotten before all Worlds; which is an incomprehensible Mystery, and which it is to no purpose for us to search into. For if in Nature the Conception of a Man itself is such a Mystery, as our weak Reason cannot dive into, how should we fathom the Abyſs of the eternal Generation of the only begotten Son of God?

3. The Son perfectly represents the Essence of his Father, since it is whole in him. *In him*, says S. Paul, Coloss. ii. 9. *dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily*: He is then the perfect, essential and natural Image of the Father. It is observable, that this Name of *Image* is not given to the Holy Ghost; because, though he draws his Origine from the Father, and is like him, yet he proceeds also from the Son. Now an Image must not represent two, but one Person: Thus several of the ancient Fathers have explained this Passage. And they used it in this Sense; 1. Against the Old *Arians*, as we may against the New, who likewise deny that the Son is of the same Essence with the Father. *If he is the Image of the Essence of his Father*, said those Orthodox Men, *then he is of the same Essence with the Father*; for no Creature can be the eternal Image of the Creator; as indeed no Creature ever bore the Name of the Image of him. It is only said of some of them, that God created them in his own Image, because he graciously bestowed upon them some Gifts, which carry some Resemblance with his glorious Perfections. 2. They used likewise this Passage against another Sort of Hereticks, viz. the *Sabellians*, who would confound the Father and the Son into one and the same Person. *The Image*, said the same Fathers, *is distinguish'd from the Person it represents, and consequently the Son is distinguish'd from the Father*: This Sense of the Words is doubtless very good in itself, and contains a most wholesome and true Doctrine; but with this Explication, to prevent cavilling from the Adversaries, that *Jesus Christ* is considered there in his Divine Essence personally;

sonally; otherwise he cannot strictly be said to be God's Image, or to be like him; for he is the same.

But, 2. there are other Commentators who follow another Interpretation, and apply the Words to *Jesus Christ*, as considered in his Mediatorial Office, which I the more willingly subscribe to, if I may be allowed to deliver my Opinion upon so nice a Matter, for that it does not differ in the main from the Doctrine of the others, and is no less adapted to overthrow the Adversaries of our blessed Saviour's Divinity: But my chief Reason is, that the Apostle does not seem to me to have had precisely the former Consideration in his Mind, when he wrote the Words of our Text. He considers *Jesus Christ* there, not particularly as he is in himself in respect of his Godhead, without any regard to his Incarnation, but rather as a Redeemer; in which Idea his Incarnation is necessarily comprized. He speaks to us of our Lord, as of an Image in which we may behold the Father. Now though *Jesus Christ*, considered in respect of his eternal Divinity, be the true and essential Image of the Father; yet if we view him but in that Manner, we can no more discern the Heavenly Father in him, than in the Father himself: Consider'd only as God, he is no less invisible to us, nor less hidden from us, than the Father. Say we then, that *Jesus Christ* is look'd upon here by *S. Paul* as our Mediator, who had undertaken, carry'd on, and happily executed the Work of our Redemption, which the Father had committed into his Hands. He tells us, that consider'd as such, he is the *Image of his Father*; because in him, as in a Looking-Glass, we may behold all the Perfections of God the Father, which otherwise would have been for ever hidden from us. The Images expose to our Sight the Colour, Figure, Dimensions, and by that means, in some manner, the Nature of those Objects which they represent, and which we see but in them. The Heavenly Father, though he
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be Infinite, and fill all things; yet was he invisible to us. Being offended with our Sins, he had covered himself with a Cloud, and, as it were, shut up his Majesty within the Heavens; leaving us far from him upon this miserable Earth. But being moved at the same time with Compassion towards us, and considering with himself, that if that Separation continu'd, we must of Necessity perish eternally; before he would shew himself to us, he was pleased to lay before the Eyes of our Souls an All-perfect Image, in which we might contemplate, not his Figure or Form, for he is a pure Spirit, but all his glorious Perfections shining in their full Lustre. This Image is *Jesus Christ*, the Apostle tells us in the Text. In him we may see all the Vertues of his Father in their Splendor, chiefly those whereof the Knowledge is necessary to us for our Comfort and Salvation; such as are these Four, *viz.* his Wisdom, his Justice, his Mercy, and his Power. Never did these four glorious Vertues appear so shiningly as in *Jesus Christ*, incarnated to perform the Work of our Salvation!

1. I must confess, the Wisdom of God the Father shews itself distinguishingly in the Order of this vast Universe; in the Proportion of its Parts; in the Regularity of the Heavenly Motions; in the Conservation of so many contrary things to one another; which though they wage a reciprocal War together continually, yet neither destroy themselves, nor the Bodies they compose. But how much brighter does that Wisdom shine forth in *Jesus Christ*, and in the Work of our Redemption, whereof he fully executed the Scheme in all its Parts, according to the wonderful Disposition which had been made of them in the eternal Counsel of the Father! So that he did nothing, but what the Father had before determined in himself from all Eternity; and the Father, on the other hand, had determined nothing in himself, but what the Son executed in the Fulness of Time.

Time. To which we may add, that in that Work *Jesus Christ* joined together two Divine Vertues, which seemed before to be directly opposite to one another; and made them both appear, and even each of them, in their highest Degree of Splendor; I mean, the Justice and the Mercy of God.

And therefore, 2. it is true indeed, that the Justice of God had revealed itself before from Heaven, in the terrible Judgments it exercised from time to time upon the Iniquity of Men. Who can think, without trembling, on that Universal Deluge wherein he drowned the first World, to wash it from the Crimes wherewith its Inhabitants had polluted it? Who can remember how he destroyed the wicked Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* with Fire and Brimstone, which he caused to rain down from Heaven; insomuch that the Ground whereon they stood bears the Marks of his Indignation to this Day? Who can remember these things, I say, without crying out at the same time, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and all thy Judgments are true!* Who can reflect how he gave up *Jerusalem* to be entirely ruined by the Arms of the *Romans*; and how, after he had so tenderly cherish'd the *Jews*, he miserably dispersed the whole Nation of them throughout the World, upon the Account of their Rebellion and their Ingratitude to our Lord *Jesus Christ*? Who can reflect upon all this, I say, without acknowledging him to be the God of Vengeance, who knows how to proportion his Punishments to the Atrocity of the Crimes Men committ? But then, in all these and the like Judgments which his Justice ever inflicted, he struck only Creatures, and even sinful Creatures: Whereas in the Work of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, we see that severe Justice standing stiffly upon its Rights, and exercising the utmost Rigour of them, not upon a Creature, but upon God's own Son; and not for his own Crimes, for he had never committed any, being the Holy of Holies, but for those
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those of others, which he was pleased to take upon himself. Harken to this, O ye hardned Sinners, and consider with yourselves how much you must needs be, shall I say, blind, or rather mad, to promise yourselves Impunity in your Crimes? If *Jesus Christ* was so severely punish'd for the Sins of others, how much more will you be for your own? *If these things were done in a green Tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

But, 3. what makes yet the Majesty of the Father appear more gloriously in *Jesus Christ*, is the Mercy of the Father, which we see shining forth in him, in as high, if not a higher Degree, than his Justice; for by *Jesus Christ*, the Father forgives repenting Sinners; he blots out all their Transgressions; he receives them into Favour: And he is so far from inflicting on them the Punishments which they had justly deserv'd, that he gives them his most precious Blessings: He delivers them from the Power of Death and the Grave, and raises them up to the Enjoyment of a happy and everlasting Life with him in Heaven. Who can comprehend, or duly set forth the Greatness of this Mercy?

Wherefore, 4. we see likewise the Power of the Father shew forth itself triumphantly in *Jesus Christ*. I shall not say here, that his Birth without a Father, as to his Humanity, and his Resurrection from the Dead the third Day, are Master-pieces of that infinite Power; whence we are told, *Rom. vi. 4.* that *Christ* was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, *i. e.* his glorious Power. Neither shall I say any thing of so many Miracles which he wrought during the Time of his Ministry in the Flesh; commanding with an absolute Sway Diseases, the Winds, the Sea, Death, the Devils themselves. These things indeed display'd before the Eyes of Men the infinite Power of the Father, which the Son came to exercise for the Salvation of his Church; but he made it shine forth, if not with
more

more Brightness, at least in a Manner much more comfortable and salutary for his own Elect, by bringing every Thought into Captivity to his Obedience, and by propagating the Doctrine of his Gospel throughout the World; and that by such feeble and contemptible Instruments in the Eyes of Flesh and Blood, as the Apostles and his other Ministers in that Work were. We admire the Power of God in the Creation of the Universe, in that it drew out of Nothing those vast Heavenly Globes which roll over our Heads, so quickly and withall so regularly; those bright Stars which dispense to us their Light and Influences; this Earth, with the various Kinds of Plants and Animals wherewith it is covered; the Sea, with all the Wonders it incloses in its Abysses. He did but speak the Word, and these things presently appeared. But this Power shewed itself yet far better, when by it *Jesus Christ* framed the New Heavens, and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness. To change an Unbeliever into a Believer, is a greater Work than the Creation of the Universe. The Primitive Nothing, out of which God drew All things in the Beginning, did not resist his Word. But the Nothing, *i. e.* Sin, out of which he must draw the Sinner, to make of him a new Creature, is as it were a Positive Nothing, which withstands the Divine Will. And yet this notwithstanding, who can reckon up the Number of the Faithful, whom *Jesus Christ* with his Almighty Arm has drawn out of the Bottom of that Nothing, and pluck'd out of the Power of Death to lead them into Life? Or who can tell how many powerful Enemies God has vanquish'd by Means of *Jesus Christ*? At the very first, the World, Hell, the Devils, conspired together against the Gospel: They caused Streams of Christian Blood to flow throughout the habitable Earth. The Faithful resisted no more than dumb Sheep which are led to the Slaughter; and yet the Gospel triumphed

triumph'd every where. The *Christian* Religion, which the *Roman* Emperors resolved to ruin, cost what it would, saw itself at last establish'd upon the Ruins of *Paganism*, which they protected with all their Power. How can Men consider these things, and not cry out, *The Right Hand of the Lord is exalted, the Right Hand of the Lord doth valiantly!* Thus in our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and his Works, is visibly seen the lively Image of his Father, and of his Heavenly Perfections! So that it was with good reason that he told *Philip*, who had ask'd him to shew him the Father, *he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*, John xiv. 9. and that the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* says, that *the Son is the Brightness of God's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*, Heb. i. 3. This Explication of the Words, as any one may perceive, is no less proper to confound the Enemies of our Lord's Divinity, than the former. For if he was but a Creature, as they would have it, and not God for ever blessed with his Father; the Vertues of his Father could never be so perfectly represented in him. No Creature is capable of the Gifts which are seen to shine forth in his Person, or of the Works he has perform'd, to exhibit to us the Sovereign Perfections of his Father.

As the *Orthodox* use the first Part of our Text against the *Hereticks*, to prove the Godhead of *Jesus Christ*; so do the *Hereticks* presume to abuse the second against the *Orthodox* to prove the contrary. They pretend, that the Apostle calling him here the *First-born of every Creature*, reckons him amongst the Creatures; and that as the First-born amongst Men is necessarily Man; so the First-born of the Creatures is a Creature: But they should consider that he is not call'd $\pi\rho\omega\tau\acute{o}\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\omicron\tau\epsilon\varsigma$, the First-created, upon the Score of Creation; but $\pi\rho\omega\tau\acute{o}\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\omicron\tau\epsilon\varsigma$, the First-born, upon the Score of Dominion; and that

† Sociniani. Whiston's Vol. IV. p. 113, 114.

if he be said to be *the Beginning of the Creation of God*, as *Rev. iii. 14.* it is to be understood of an Active, not Passive Beginning, as is evident from the Context here. Notwithstanding, if they thereby mean that *Jesus Christ* is such a Creature, in respect of his Human Nature, that he is at the same time the Creator, and the only true God, in respect of his Divine; we are so far agreed. But because it is plain they argue thus, only to infer thence, that *Jesus Christ* is but a Creature, and that he is not God; it is absolutely necessary to confute them. Consider we then the Words attentively, though I can explain them now but briefly, to keep within the set Bounds of this *Discourse*: I may have Occasion to enlarge upon them in ¹ another to the same Purpose.

I lay down this then in the first place, as a Foundation in general, which is sufficient to take off all the Cavils of our Adversaries, and to establish the present Truth; that *S. Paul* uses here the Term of *First-born*, not in a Proper and Natural, but in a Figurative and Metaphorical Sense, as will appear from the following Reasons. For, 1. it is agreed on all hands, that the *First-born* in the proper Sense must necessarily be of the same Nature, and of the same Species with those whereof he is the *First-born*. Now *Jesus Christ* is called here *the First-born of every Creature*, and especially of the Angels, as is evident from the Verse immediately subjoined. And yet he is not, by the Confession of our Adversaries themselves, of the same Nature with them.

2. He that is named the *First-born*, in the proper Sense, ought to have come into the World by the same Principle, and in the same Manner, as his younger Brethren. But who does so much as pretend to be ignorant, amongst *Christians*, that the Origine of *Jesus Christ*, as to his Divine Nature, and in a great measure as to his Humane, is quite different from

¹ Vide *Discourse VIII. on Hebr. i. 6.*

that of the Creatures? The Scripture tells us in more Places than one, that he was *begotten of the Father*, i. e. God; and even that he is *his only begotten Son*, in a peculiar Manner, and exclusive of all other Beings; which is no where said of the Angels, or of any other Creature. And indeed the Angels themselves are never called the Brethren of *Jesus Christ*; none but Men, in respect of the Humane Nature which he was pleased to take upon himself.

3. The First-born, properly so called, cannot be the Principle or Origine of his younger Brethren. But now *Jesus Christ*, as the Apostle teaches us in the Verse immediately following, is the Author of all the Creatures; *for by him*, says he, *were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible.* So that I think, it is pretty plain, that *Jesus Christ* is not styled here the *First-born of every Creature*, in a proper Sense; and that therefore our Adversaries cannot draw a concluding Argument from that Expression, to invalidate his Divinity.

It remains then, in the second place, that if this Appellation given to *Jesus Christ*, of the *First-born of every Creature*, ought not to be taken in a Proper and Natural Sense, it must be understood in a Figurative and Metaphorical; and that I now explain particularly the Meaning of it, to confirm the Truth of our Saviour's Godhead, against the Enemies of it. Now though the Expression be used Figuratively here by *S. Paul*, as our Adversaries must own; yet I cannot but confess at the same time, that it ought to bear some Analogy to the Proper Signification of it: Otherwise there will be no Foundation for the Figure, and we shall be forced to fall back into the natural Acceptation of the Words. In order therefore to discover the Truth of this Matter, I must premise, though some of them have been already intimated, that there are four things which may be considered in the Idea of a *First-born*, properly so termed, *viz.* his Nature, his

Origine, his Seniority, and his Dignity. 1. As to his *Nature*, a First-born must have it the same with his younger Brethren. And therefore a Palace, *ex. gr.* built by an able Architect, may not be called the First-born, in respect of a Son, who is born to that Architect afterwards: The Palace and the Son are of a quite different Nature. 2. As to his *Origine*, it ought to be the same; the First-born, and his younger Brethren, must be born from the same Parents, at least be Half-Brethren, and in the same way. A Man, or a Horse, pardon the Instance, would be a monstrous First-born to the other; because they are of a directly opposite Origine and Manner of Generation. In respect of these two things therefore, there ought to be a Conformity between a First-born and his younger Brethren, according to the very Notion of the Terms. But in respect of the other two, there ought to be a Difference, according to the same. For, 3. as to his *Seniority*, the First-born must be older than his younger Brethren; otherwise there would not be First-born and younger Brethren between them, but they would be all born at the same time; which implies a Contradiction in the very Words. And, 4. as to his *Dignity*, according to the general Usage of all the Nations of the World, the First-born has some Prerogatives and Advantages, which raise him above his younger Brethren: But especially amongst the Patriarchs, and the ancient *Jews*, to the Customs of whom the Scripture perpetually alludes; which seems to make it to be of Natural Right, *Gen. iv. 7.* The First-born was the Lord and Master of all his Brethren, and as it were the Prince of the Paternal House.

The Apostle then, in giving here the Title of the *First-born of every Creature* to *Jesus Christ*, it is plain, has no regard to the two first of these four things. Not to the Nature of a First-born; for the Creatures, whereof, he tells us immediately after, *Jesus Christ* is the *First-born*, are not of the same Nature with

with him; nay, are not all of the same Nature; being things spiritual and corporeal, visible and invisible; the Angels, the Heaven, the Earth, all things created. Neither to the Origine of a First-born; for the Origine of *Jesus Christ* is different from that of all Creatures. *I came forth from the Father*, says he himself, *John* xvi. 28. and *all things were created by him*, as *S. Paul* tells us in the subsequent Verse to ours. So that it remains, that he has respect either to the Seniority, or the Dignity of a First-born. And according to these two respects, this Expression is capable of a double Acceptation. 1. If we referr it to the Seniority of a First-born, as most of the Fathers do; we may say, that the Apostle calls *Jesus Christ* the First-born of every Creature, because the Father begot him before he had made any Creature, *i. e.* from all Eternity. He declares it so himself, *Prov.* viii. 22. *The Lord possessed me in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of old.* And therefore *S. Paul* does not say, that *Jesus Christ* was created before all things, as he would have done, if he had look'd upon him as a Creature: But that he is the First-born, or First-begotten of every Creature, because he considers him as like, or as equal to his eternal Father: Begotten, in respect of his Nature; first, upon the account of his Eternity, in regard of which he infinitely excells all the Creatures, since they had all a Beginning. This Sense is very good; but it does not seem to stand well with what is added lower of *Jesus Christ*, that he is *before all things*; forcing a kind of Tautology into the Discourse of the Apostle.

And therefore, since the Expression is capable of another Acceptation, which is as good, and more commodious; let us rather say, 2dly and lastly, that *S. Paul* has a particular respect here to the Dignity of a First-born; and that by the Title of the First-born of every Creature, which he gives *Jesus Christ*, he chiefly means his Sovereign Authority over them; in Allusion to that Power which the First-born, according

according to the Practice of the Patriarchs, had over his younger Brethren. As the First-born had Lordship and Dominion over his Brethren, so has Jesus Christ over all the Creatures. And indeed the Term of First-born is oftentimes put in Scripture, to signify a Lord or Master. So God says of *David*, Ps. lxxxix. 27. *I will make him my First-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth*; where the latter Clause is added, to explain the former. And *Job* xviii. 13. as it is understood by Interpreters, the *First-born of Death* is used, to denote him who has the Empire of Death. The First-born of every Creature is then the Master, the Lord of every Creature. So that the Apostle teaches us here the same thing, which we learn *Heb. i. 2.* wherein he tells us, that *God has appointed his Son Heir of all things*: 'For the Heir is Lord and Master of all. Jesus Christ then, in respect of his Divine Nature, has an absolute Power over all the Creatures; both upon the Score of his infinite Majesty, which gives him a Right over them; and because they are his own Workmanship. This Empire belongs to him from all Eternity, and is common to him with the Father. But we must observe, that here, as well as in that fore-cited Passage of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, another kind of Empire ought to be understood, which is peculiar to the Son, in the quality of Redeemer of Mankind. The Father in investing his Son with the Office of Mediator, for the Salvation of his Church, endowed him with all the requisite Power for the accomplishing of so great a Work. He has given him all Authority in Heaven and Earth to that end: So that he is the Sovereign Lord and Master of all things, in that Capacity, without any Exception: Of the Good Angels, who obey him faithfully, as *ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*, *Heb. i. 14.* And of the Evil likewise, who are his Enemies indeed, but are kept so *chained up*

1 Vide Justin. Instit. Lib. 2. Tit. 19. §. 6.

by him, that they can do no Hurt without his Permission; yet using them sometimes as Executioners, to inflict his Judgments upon his other Adversaries. Which shews, that he is also the Lord and Master of wicked Men. It is true, they are Rebels to him, and say with those seditious Subjects in the Gospel, *Luke xix. 14. We will not have this Man to reign over us.* But he is God, and knows how to rule them, notwithstanding their desperate Malice: A Time will come, wherein they shall feel the Weight of his Iron Scepter. As for the Good, they are his true Subjects, who observe his Laws, and thereby enjoy the Happiness of his Government.

Since then we learn here, that *Jesus Christ* is the *Image of the invisible God*, i. e. *God blessed for ever with the Father*, and *the First-born of every Creature*, i. e. *the Lord and Master of them all*; let us learn hence likewise, humbly to submit to his Scepter, and obey his Laws. The Father hath appointed him Heir of all things: They are all subject to him, without Exception. The Heaven, the Earth, the Winds, the Sea, Death itself, and the very Devils are forced to own his Empire. And should we be so mad as to rebell against him, when his Godhead from all Eternity gives him such an absolute Power over us? It is true, that seeing this Power, upon the Occasion of our Sins, tended but to punish us, and to make us eternally miserable; he was pleased, in order to his reigning over us after a more salutary manner, to take upon him our Nature, to give his Blood, and to suffer the ignominious Death of the Cross. But this lays a new Obligation of Gratitude upon us, to obey him the more chearfully. He is the First-born of all the other Creatures, only as he is their Lord: But he has been pleased to be our Lord in a more gracious, more perfect, and infinitely more advantageous Sense for us. He cloathed himself with our Flesh; and he is not ashamed to own us for his Brethren: He is *the First-born among many Brethren*, Rom.

viii. 29. Oh ! wonderful Mercy of our Saviour ! He would not do the same Favour to the Angels. They acknowledge him indeed for their Lord ; they glory in being subject to him ; but he is not their Brother : Whereas he is at the same time both our Lord, and our eldest Brother ; and he does even shew us a Kindness, which is not usual from a First-born to his younger Brethren : A First-born, to whom the Throne solely belongs, does not commonly associate his younger Brethren with him in the Possession of it. But our Lord is desirous to make us Partakers of his Kingdom ; he would have us be Kings and Priests to God his Father. *To him that overcometh*, says he, *Rev. iii. 21. will I grant to sit with me in my Throne.* What an Ingratitude would it be in us, if we should refuse to obey so gracious a Saviour ! But alas ! it is but too notorious, that the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, engage us daily in the committing of such Sins, as we cannot be ignorant he is offended with. And is it thus that we shew ourselves Followers of that perfect Obedience, which he paid his Father ? Though he is naturally the Son of God, he obeyed him as a Servant. And we who are naturally subjected to him, both as Creatures to their Creator, and as Redeemed to their Redeemer, we deny him that Obedience, to which we are bound by so many Motives of Love, Gratitude, and the Hope of future Bliss ! Shew we then ourselves, for the time to come, more faithful and zealous in his Service, than we have done hitherto ; that living holily in this World, we may be transformed into the Image of our blessed Saviour. By this means we shall be the Image of *Jesus Christ*, as *Jesus Christ* is the Image of his Father. And so the Image of the invisible God will now begin to appear in us, till it becomes perfect in that other Life ; wherein beholding Face to Face the eternal Father, we shall be enlighten'd with his brightest Splendor, and penetrated thoroughly with all the Rays of his Glory. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant !



DISCOURSE VIII.



The Angelical Worship of Jesus Christ.



HEBREWS i. 6.

*And again, when he bringeth in the First-
begotten into the World, he saith, And let all
the Angels of God worship him.*



WHEN God sent his Son *Jesus Christ* into the World to be the Redeemer of his Church, he was pleased to join together in him a sovereign Majesty and a deep Humiliation. *Jesus Christ* is the Son of the most High God; but he is likewise the Son of *Mary*, i. e. of a poor simple Maiden, betrothed to a *Carpenter*. The Rumour of his Birth alarms Kings, and their Capital Cities; and though he be yet in his Cradle, they do not think all their Powers able to hinder him from over-turning their Thrones.

Thrones. But he has scarce seen the Light, that his Parents, *i. e.* his Mother, and his reputed Father, are forced to carry him into *Egypt*, to secure him from the Fury of the Murderers who seek his Life, and will spare no Blood to come at it. He is the King of Heaven and Earth; but though *the Foxes have Holes*, as he himself declares, and *the Birds of the Air have Nests*, yet he has not where to lay his Head. The Winds, the Storms, the Sea, the Devils themselves, obey his Voice; but his Word is rejected by those of his own Nation. The very Angels of God worship him, but both *Jews* and *Gentiles* rise up together against him; they load him with Infamy, do him a thousand Injuries, and at last nail him to the cursed Tree of a Cross, like a Slave; whereon, after he has suffered the most exquisite Torments, he ends his Life in the midst of two Thieves. Whilst our Lord dwelt upon Earth, to do those things which were necessary to purchase us everlasting Salvation; it must be confessed that his Majesty lay as it were eclipsed under the Veil of his Humiliation; but afterwards, as the Son dissipates those Fogs which darken its Light, he caused, with the Brightness of his Glory, all that to disappear to the Eyes of Men, which they had look'd upon in him before as mean and abject; he made himself be owned for the eternal Son of the Living God: He displayed that Almighty Power which his Father had given him in Heaven and Earth: He shewed plainly, that though he had been a Reproach of Men, and despised of the People; yet he was notwithstanding really such an one as the Angels, those pure and glorious Spirits Above, worship with the profoundest Veneration: Which is the Doctrine the Apostle teaches us here, in the Verse I have chosen to be the Subject of this *Discourse*.

¹ *S. Paul's* Design in this Epistle being to treat of *Jesus Christ* as our Mediator, he sets forth his

Divinity in this Chapter, by shewing how much he is raised above the Angels. This he proves in part in the two preceding Verses, by observing that none of them bear that glorious Title of the Son of God in a proper and peculiar Sense, as he does. And here, in Confirmation of the same Truth, he alleges another Proof taken from the Adoration which they are commanded to pay him. *And again, says he, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the World, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him.* Though the *Arians* denied the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*, by affirming him to be a Creature; yet it is observable that they did not refuse him Divine Worship. The same thing is to be said of the *Socinians*, who in these latter Days have transcribed their Doctrines in a great measure; at least of the first of them who appeared in the World, and in their publick Confessions of Faith. How consistently they acted with their Principles, is not my Business at present to enquire; it is something that they proceeded no farther. But it is but too Notorious, that several of them in our Time, and in this very Kingdom, have done otherwise; and have not only opposed the Godhead of our blessed Saviour in their Conversation and Writings, but dropt the Worshipping of him in their Devotions. And since they are come to that Pitch of Insolence both against Scripture and Law, ¹ as to hold a religious Meeting, wherein they pretend to serve God in the Way of the *Unitarians*, ² and threaten us with the Continuation or Revival of it, if they are excluded from our Communion; I presume, it cannot but be reasonable to endeavour to check so growing an Evil.

¹ Emlin's *late Meeting in London*.

² Whiston's *Hist. Pref. Postscr. p. 74.*

Consider

Consider we therefore in the Words of the Text,
 1. the Preface the Apostle uses, to shew the End why he alledges a Passage of Scripture; wherein he says, that the Father spoke the Words concerning his *First-begotten*, when he brought him into the World;
 2. The Passage itself, *And let all the Angels of God worship him.*

As to the first Head, there are few ignorant, that by the *First-begotten*, or the *First-born* Son of God, we must understand *Jesus Christ*. Now the Lawyers, particularly the Civilians, give that Name of *First-born* Son to him that has no Brethren born before him, though he may have none born after him. In which Sense, S. *Luke*, relating the Birth of our Saviour, calls him the *First-born* Son of *Mary*, Chap. ii. ver. 7. For we may not inferr thence, that the Blessed Virgin had any other Sons afterwards, as some formerly believed; but whose Opinion is now quite rejected.

But *Jesus Christ* is term'd here the *First-begotten* Son of God, with regard to his Divine Nature. The Heavenly Father never begot any before him. He is from all Eternity; *the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his way, before his Works of old*, as the eternal Wisdom tells us, *Prov. viii. 22*. He is the only Son of God in a proper Sense, who is come forth from him; the only one that the Father begot of his own Substance, communicating to him his whole Essence, and all his infinite Perfections. When Men, or Magistrates, or Angels are called Children, or Sons of God, as it must be confessed they sometimes are in Scripture, it is in another Meaning, and upon other Accounts. Men are so styled, because God created them, and takes care of them, as a Father does of his Children. Magistrates, because the Power and Authority they hold from him, makes them be look'd upon as living Images of him upon Earth. Angels, because the Glory wherewith he has crowned them, exhibits some Representation

tion of his Majesty. But it is in a peculiar Acceptation, if we examine it narrowly, that *S. Paul* calls here *Jefus Christ* the *First-born* Son of God. For he considers him here neither simply as to his Humane Nature, nor simply as to his Divine. He treats of him in this Epistle and Chapter, as I have already intimated, with regard chiefly to his Office of Mediator, which includes both the one and the other of these two Natures, and necessarily requires them in him: So then *Jefus Christ* is termed here the *First-born* Son of God, according to the Style of the *Hebrews*, to whom this is written.

Now, according to the Style of the *Hebrews*, grounded upon their Laws and Customs, the First-born under his Father, whilst he lived, was reputed the Head of the whole Family; the Lord and Master of all his younger Brethren. Whence it was that *Efau*, having sold his Birth-right to *Jacob*, he thereby became his Servant; and by that means made good the Prophecy which had foretold, that the Elder should serve the Younger: Whereas, according to the Right of Nature and Birth, the Younger was to serve the Elder. For which reason, *Isaac* tells *Efau* expressly, *Gen. xxvii. 37.* that having given *Jacob* the Blessing which belonged to the *First-born*, he had made him his Lord, and all his Brethren had he given to him for Servants. When *Jefus Christ* then, in the Quality of Mediator, is called the *First-born* Son of God, it implies that he is the Head, the Lord, and Master in the whole Divine Family, of all that appertains to God, *i. e.* of all the Creatures, without any Exception. Which *S. Paul* would teach us, when he says, *Coloss. i. 15.* that *Jefus Christ* is the *First-born of every Creature*. The Hereticks wrest that Passage to their own Condemnation, when they would conclude thence that our Saviour is but a Creature; because the First-born Son of a Family is but a Man, of the same Nature with his Brethren. For the Apostle, following therein the Style
of

of the *Hebrews*, puts the Word *First-born* for that of *Heir*; so that he would say, that *Jesus Christ* is the Lord and Master of all the Creatures. He is the Lord not only of the Inanimate, as the Heavens, the Air, the Earth, the Sea; not only of all People, Nations and Languages, but also and principally of those whom he owns for his Brethren, and whom God his Father looks upon as his Children, *i. e.* the Faithful. For if, according to the Laws of the *Hebrews*, which in this respect were the Laws of Nature, the *First-born* was Lord of all his Brethren, though between his Birth and theirs there was but a simple Difference of Order and Time, and they were all of the same Nature with him; how much more is *Jesus Christ* the Lord of all the Faithful, since he is the Son of God by Nature and Birth; whereas they are so but by the Adoption, which of his meer Grace he has procured them! He is then named the *First-born* Son of God, to shew us that he is infinitely raised above all things. The World is no other than a great and numerous Family, whereof God is the Father. All things which are either in Heaven, or in Earth, or under the Earth, are his Estate. He keeps Servants of all sorts, whereof some are faithful and obedient to him, as the good Angels, and the Just; others are unfaithful and rebellious, as the Devils, and the Wicked. But besides all this, he has a *First-born* Son, whom *he has appointed Heir and Lord of all things*; as it is said above, *ver. 2.* This is *Jesus Christ*, *at whose Name every Knee must bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth*; as we are taught, *Philipp. ii. 10.*

It is therefore of this *First-begotten* Son of God that *S. Paul* speaks here; of whom he tells us farther, that God brought him into the World: Upon which we are to observe, 1. that the Scripture mentions two kinds chiefly of *Jesus Christ's* coming into the World; one which has happened already,
and

and the other which is still to happen. In the one, he came to bear our Sins; in the other, he will come again to give us his Glory. In the one, he came to be judged himself; in the other, he will come again to judge both the Quick and the Dead. In the one, he felt the Power of Death; in the other, he will tread Death under his Feet. The New Testament distinguishes clearly these two kinds of Coming; but the Old often describes them in such a manner, as seems to mix and confound them. The Reason whereof is worthy of Observation, and it is this: The Prophets foreseeing, by that Prophetick Spirit which was in them, these two kinds of Coming, but as far remote in future Ages; beheld them as if they had been to happen at the same time, or even as if they had been but one and the same Coming; just as a Man who sees two Towers a great way off upon the same Line, fancies them to be but one Tower, or at least that they touch one another, though there is a considerable Distance between them.

And therefore we are to observe, 2. that this double Coming of *Jesus Christ* has occasioned two different Explications of this Clause. ¹ Some understand it of the first Coming of *Jesus Christ* into the World, wherein he suffered for our Sins, bearing them in his own Body on the Tree. ² Others explain it of his second Coming, which will shew him us glorious and triumphant, judging the Quick and the Dead. Those who are of this last Opinion, ground themselves chiefly upon the Particle *again*; which, they say, denotes not his former, but his latter Introduction into the World. For they construe it thus, *When he brought in again his First-begotten into the World*. And indeed, the Words being so placed in the Original, they should regularly be so render'd.

¹ Erasmus, De Launai, & alii in locum.

² Ribera, Camero, & alii.

But this Reason is of no great Weight, all Circumstances considered. For it may be answered, that that Particle *again* is not to be joined with the Word *bringing in*, as they pretend; but that it ought to be put at the Beginning of the Sentence, as our Translators have done: So that it serves only to shew, that the Apostle would connect a Passage of Scripture with those he has already quoted. So it is taken by the *Syriack* Interpreter, who is very ancient. And such Transpositions of Words are so often to be met with in Scripture, that I think I need not give any Instances of them.

But there are two very material Considerations, which may induce us to believe, that *S. Paul* speaks here of the former Coming of *Jesus Christ* into the World. 1. The Expression of *bringing in*, or introducing, which he uses, denotes to establish by little and little, and after a mild and insinuating manner: Which cannot well agree with the latter Coming of our Lord. For the Scripture declares, that he shall appear *suddenly* in the Clouds of Heaven, with *Power*, and *great Glory*; with a lively Splendor, that shall immediately strike the Sight of all Mankind, as the Lightning that shines in an instant from East to West. But it suits perfectly with the Manner of his former Introduction into the World. When the Heavenly Father brought him in, he insinuated him insensibly into the Hearts of Men: And he himself establish'd his Kingdom, both amongst the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, not by Force of Arms, not by an Arm of Flesh, but by the Power of his Grace: A Power indeed victorious, and invincible; but owing all its Energy to that Mildness wherewith it wins the Hearts, and brings every Thought into Captivity to the Obedience of *Christ*. So that whereas *Sampson* said in his Riddle, *Out of the Strong came forth Sweetness*; we may say, on the contrary, concerning that Grace which has introduced *Jesus Christ* and his Gospel

Gospel into the World, *Out of the Sweet came forth Strength.*

2. The latter Coming of *Jesus Christ* cannot, properly speaking, be termed his Bringing into the World. The Day of that Coming will be the End of the World, as the Scripture teaches us. *The Heavens*, as we are told there, 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. *shall then pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat; the Earth also, and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up.* I might alledge several other Reasons of this kind, if it were necessary, contained in the very *Psalms*, viz. xcvi. whence the Passage itself is taken. As, *ex. gr.* that implied in *verse 1.* wherein the *Psalmist* calls upon the *Earth* to rejoice, and the *Multitude of the Isles* to be glad; i. e. the *Gentiles*, at the Coming whereof he treats: Whereas when the Scripture speaks of *Christ's* last Coming, it tells us, that *the Nations shall howl and lament, and shall smite upon their Breasts.* And that we meet in *verse 7.* immediately before the Words cited here by the Apostle, where the Prophet denounces Confusion to the Idolaters: Which has proved to be the proper Effect of our Lord's first Coming into the World. For the Light of his Gospel having cleared the Sight of Men, has made them ashamed of their past Idolatries. It is to little purpose to oppose to this some Passages of this *Psalms*, which seem to relate particularly to the second Coming of *Jesus Christ*; as, that *a Fire goeth before him; that his Lightnings enlighten the World; that the Hills melt like Wax at his Presence.* For since the sacred Authors of the Old Testament confound oftentimes in their Descriptions these two kinds of our Lord's Coming, as I have intimated before; it is our Part, who have the Lamp of the Gospel in our Hand, whereby we may dispell the Obscurity of their Writings, to use it with Judgment, in order to our applying to each Coming what is proper to it, and no more. Conclude we therefore, that *S. Paul* lays it down in his Preface,

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that the Words he alledges here, were spoken concerning *Jesus Christ*, when his Father sent him into the World, cloathed with our Flesh, to make Atonement for our Sins, and to purchase for us Heaven by his Death.

But before I proceed to the Examination of the Passage here quoted, I think it will not be amiss, if I make one or two Reflexions upon what the Apostle says, that *Jesus Christ, the First-born Son of God, was brought into the World.* 1. It seems to me, that there is imply'd therein a tacit Opposition or Comparison between our blessed Saviour and the People of *Israel*. This chosen People was likewise named the *First-born Son of God*. Thou shalt say unto *Pharaoh*, says God to *Moses*, *Exod. iv. 22. Israel is my Son, even my First-born.* It might be objected then to *S. Paul*, that that Name of *First-born*, which he pretended to lay as a Foundation, to shew that *Jesus Christ* was raised above the Angels, was common to him and the People of *Israel*, which was made up but of mortal Men, much lower than those glorious Spirits. But he obviates the Objection, by saying, that the Heavenly Father had brought in his *First-begotten Son* *Jesus Christ* into the World. It is true, admits he, that God loved tenderly his People *Israel*, and that he took a particular Care of him, as a Father amongst all his Children cherishes in a peculiar manner his *First-born Son*, and is continually employ'd in getting all kinds of Advantages for him. And the most distinguishing Mark of that Love and Care consisted in this, that after he had wrought a thousand Miracles, to rescue him out of the Bondage of *Egypt*, he had at last introduced him into the Country of *Canaan*, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. But, says the Apostle silently, the Father has done infinitely more for his *First-born Son* *Jesus Christ*. Though he be but one single Person, and not a whole People, as *Israel* was; yet he has given him a much greater and more precious Heritage: Not a small Corner

of the Earth, as was *Judea*; but τῷ Οἰκουμένῳ, the habitable Earth, the whole World. He has brought him into the World.

To this, 2. we may add, that by this means *S. Paul* opposes likewise tacitly a pernicious Error of the *Jews*; out of which, those he wrote to were not yet perhaps well recovered. That People generally imagined, that the *Messiah* or *Christ* was to be sent only for them, and not for the other Nations of the Earth. They expected to find in his Person a powerful and glorious Protector: But they believed at the same time, that the *Gentiles* would meet in him but with a formidable Enemy, who should destroy them. They used to say, that he would be a Light for *Israel*, but a consuming Fire for the Nations. Hence it was, that they could not endure that the Gospel should be preach'd to the *Gentiles*. It proved a Rock of Offence, against which the most part of the *Jews* struck; and it turned away great Numbers of them from the Faith in *Jesus Christ*. The Apostle therefore being apprized of this, to discountenance this Error handsomely, tells them by the by, as it were, that our Lord was not sent only into *Judea*, but into the *World*: And that not to call the *Jews* only to Salvation, but likewise all the other People who were upon the Face of the Earth. This any one may perceive to have been his Design, who will take notice of the Beginning of the *Psalms*, whence he borrowed the Passage he alledges. The *Psalmist* would have there the *Earth*, and particularly the *Isles*, i. e. according to the Style of Scripture, the *Gentiles*, rejoice, because the Lord reigneth. Whence it follows evidently, that *Jesus Christ* was to reign over them; and even after such a manner, as ought to make them rejoice, i. e. not to destroy them, but to save them, and bring them to Happiness.

We must not pass over here in Silence, what *S. Paul* says so expressly in this Clause of the Text, viz. that it was the *Father* who brought in his *First-begot-*

ten into the World : Whereby he intimates, 1. that the Gospel of *Jesus Christ* has been establish'd, not by Humane Means, but in a way wholly Supernatural and Divine. And indeed its Progress was such, as might convince the most Obdurate, that it was the Work of God, and not of Men. If the most skilful Warriours had been consulted to give their Opinion, how all the People of the Earth might be reduced to the Obedience of *Jesus Christ*, it is very likely they would have declared, that to compass such a Design, there must be numerous Armies raised, and experienced Officers provided, to carry the Terror of their Arms every where. But this was performed successfully by twelve Apostles: They went and settled the Kingdom of our Lord throughout the World; but that by suffering patiently, and shedding their own Blood, not that of others, who opposed their Preaching. If the wisest Politicians had been ask'd, what was to be done to overthrow *Paganism*, and build the *Christian* Religion upon its Ruins, it is probable they would have answer'd, that the Learned must be engaged in it, the most subtil Philosophers, and the most elegant Orators, who in publishing the Mysteries of that new Persuasion, might back them with such Arguments, as none should withstand the Force of. But instead of such Persons, our blessed Saviour chose twelve simple illiterate Fisher-men; who far from reading Books, and studying in Colleges, had spent their Youth in their Boats in casting their Nets. Who could have thought, that the Preaching of such Men would ever have been a proper Means to grub up Idolatry, which was rooted in the World for so many Ages; to baffle the Doctrines of Priests and Philosophers; and to overturn the Temples of Idols? And who can forbear acknowledging the Finger of God herein; and the Power of the *Heavenly Father* in bringing *Jesus Christ* and his Gospel into the World?

But, 2. the Apostle intimates likewise, in speaking thus, that tho' the Means which God uses to establish his Gospel, are weak in Appearance; yet they fail not to work out successfully those Ends for which he intends them. It is in vain that the People, or the Kings of the Earth, set themselves against the Establishing of *Jesus Christ* and his Gospel in the World: It is in vain that *they take Counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed*. They can form but fruitless Designs against the First-begotten of the Father; it is God himself brings him into the World. They must either bow the Neck under his Yoke, or perish everlastingly. *His Kingdom shall break in pieces and consume all other Kingdoms; but itself shall stand for ever, as we are taught Dan. ii. 44.*

Which leads me into the Consideration of the second Thing proposed, viz. the Passage itself which *S. Paul* quotes here, *And let all the Angels of God worship him*. In relation to which, it is remarkable, that the Ancients were of Opinion, that it was taken out of *Deut. xxxii.* where we have *Moses's* Song recorded at large. The Reason whereof is, that they followed the *Greek* Translation of the Seventy Interpreters, wherein we read these Words, *ver. 43. Rejoice with him, O Heavens; let all the Angels of God worship him*. But there is nothing like it in the *Hebrew* Text, which is the Original. It is therefore upon better Grounds that others maintain, that the Passage in question is borrowed out of *Psal. xcvi.* where *ver. 7.* we have these Words, *Worship him, all ye Gods; which, as I shall shew by and by, is to the same Effect*. It is true, that in the *Hebrew* Context of the *Psalms*, there is no Inscription whereby we may learn by what Author, or upon what particular Occasion it was written. But the *Greek* Version tells us, (if we will admitt its Authority in this Case more than in the foregoing, as there are Reasons why we should, which will appear as we go along, and might probably

bably induce the Apostle to do so) it tells us, I say, in the very Entrance, that it was composed by *David*, when his Land was restored to him, which must mean, when after many Battles fought, and several Victories obtained, he saw himself in quiet Possession of the Holy Land, which God had given him long before, even when he had caused him to be anointed King over the People of *Israel*. Others believed, that it was composed to be sung when the Ark was received into the Temple of *Jerusalem*. Let that be as it will; it is certain, that both the Ark and the Reign of *David* were but Figures; which could by no means fill up the Sense of those great and lofty Expressions, whereof this sacred Hymn does in a manner consist. We must come to the Truth, and to the thing signified, *viz.* Christ; whereof, it is evident, the *Psalmist* describes there the Reign and Coming.

It is then in vain that the modern *Jews* pretend, that they cannot perceive this in it. It is in vain that they ask, why the Words of this *Psalms* may not as well be understood of the Father, *i. e.* *David*, as of the Son *Jesus Christ*, who was *David's* Son in a Lineal Descent according to the Flesh? To which we may answer, 1. That all their Doctors lay it down for a general Maxim, that the most illustrious and the most remarkable Passages of the Old Testament, are to be referred to *Christ*, as being the Center and Scope of the Scriptures. And therefore it is to him we must apply this *Psalms*, which without Controversy has something very noble and singular in it, beyond most of the others. 2. Their ancient Doctors do indeed understand not only this, but the other Passages of this kind, which are cited by the Authors of the New Testament, in the same manner. And therefore the Apostle might very well suppose here, what the *Hebrews*, to whom he writes, generally allowed in his time; and what their Successors, the *Jews*, call in question at this day, only out
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of their Blindness, and the inveterate Hatred they bear the Gospel. But, 3. as for us, who by the Grace of God are *Christians*, we need not stick at these things: The Authority of *S. Paul* is sufficient to convince us, that the Person meant in the Words, whom all the *Angels of God* are bidden to worship, is *Jesus Christ*. That holy Pen-man was Divinely inspired, as all the other Writers of the New Testament were. The Signs and Miracles God wrought by his Hands, were a demonstrative Proof of the Truth of his Doctrine. And the *Jews* themselves ought to acquiesce in the Evidence; which shews them, that the Apostles were sent from Heaven, as well as the Prophets.

It appears by this time, I hope, not only that this Passage is taken out of *Psalms* xcvi. 7. the latter Part, but also that it ought to be understood of *Jesus Christ*, as to the Person therein to be worshipped, and of his Reign; even by the Principles of the *Jews* themselves. There is indeed Word for Word in the Original, *Worship him, all ye Gods*. But we must take notice, that the Apostle follows here the Version of the *Septuagint*, who render it, *Worship him, all ye his Angels*. For not only *S. Paul*, but the other Authors of the New Testament, are observed likewise to follow that *Greek* Translation often; doubtless because it was then received amongst the *Jews*; and that even where it seems to depart from the Original: I say, where it seems to do so; for it is not to be imagined, that where there is a manifest or real Opposition between them, the Apostle, or the other sacred Writers, would prefer any Version before the Original. Which happens to be the Case here; where there only seems to be some Contrariety in the Words, but none is in the Sense; and where *S. Paul* had a particular Reason to follow the Translation of the *Septuagint*, rather than the *Hebrew* Text. And that Reason was, that though that Version on this Occasion does but render part of the

Signification of the Word in the Original, it explains more clearly and expressly what the Apostle had in view here, viz. to raise *Jesus Christ* above the Angels. The Name which is here translated *Angels*, is in the *Hebrew*, *Elohim*; and is of a large Extent. It denotes in general, the Power and Glory of those to whom it is given. And therefore it is often ascribed to the true God: Nay, it is the very first Name that he bears in Scripture, in those first Words of *Genesis*; *In the Beginning God, Elohim* in the Original, *created the Heaven and the Earth*. But besides that, it is applied to all the Creatures which are powerful and glorious, whether in Reality or in Appearance only. Which *S. Paul* alludes to *1 Cor. viii. 5.* where he says, *There be Gods many, and Lords many*. It is ascribed not only to the Angels, whereof the great Glory and extraordinary Power are a Resemblance of those of God; not only to the Magistrates, who having the Authority to judge Men, hold the Place of God here below, who bears this Name of *Elohim*, as the *Hebrews* tell us, upon the account of the Judgment he exercises; as he does that of *Jehovah*, on the score of his Mercy: But even to the false Gods, who though they are nothing in themselves, are yet esteemed glorious and powerful by their blind Votaries.

This has given Occasion to some to think, that the Name of *Elohim* in the Original Text is to be taken in all these Significations; and that *David* enjoins thereby not only the Angels, but likewise the Magistrates, especially the Supreme, and also the false Gods, to worship *Jesus Christ*. The Particle *all*, which is there joined with it, seems to favour this Opinion. But though I will not deny, that the Magistrates, especially the supreme, are comprized in the whole Expression, because they may be signified by the Name of *Angels*, as well as of *Elohim*, being in an eminent Degree amongst the Creatures; and it makes the Translation full: I cannot agree, that
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the false Gods should be included in it. For, 1. in the Words immediately preceding, the *Psalmist* calls them by a Name of Contempt, which denotes their Vanity: And therefore it is not likely he would give them here one of Glory and Power. 2. It is to be observed, that when the Word *Elohim* is put to signify the false Gods, there is always something annex'd to it, to restrain it to that Sense. And therefore it is, the *Gods*, or *Elohim* of the *Heathens*, the *Gods* of the *Nations*. 3. Since the Idols are nothing, and subsist only in the Imagination of those that serve them, it would have been in vain for the *Psalmist* to call upon them to worship *Jesus Christ*. What is not, is as incapable to pay a Worship, as to receive it; as incapable to worship, as unworthy to be worshipped. The Original Text then can only be understood of the Angels, and of the Magistrates, in the Sense I have mentioned. The Apostle had Occasion here only for the former Sense; and therefore he takes the Version of the *Septuagint*, which does more clearly and expressly explain his Mind, without excluding the latter.

The Worship which both the *Psalmist*, and after him *S. Paul*, would have all the Angels pay *Jesus Christ*, is a Religious Action, whereby the Votaries acknowledge the infinite Perfections of him whom they adore, and their own Infirmities; owning themselves to be wholly subject to him, and expecting from him with a firm Assurance, and an entire Resignation, all the things they stand in need of. Since that Action terminates in God, who is infinite, it should be infinite likewise, if it were possible. But that cannot be: For they and we being limited and finite in our Nature, as we are, no Act of ours can be infinite. However, as much as in us lieth, we must make our Adoration tend to Infinity: We ought never to sit still in the Act of our Adoration; but must perpetually endeavour to render it more submissive. The Reason is, that we can never enough
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acknowledge how much God is raised above us; or how much we are abased below him. As great as may be the Distance which we conceive between him and us; we can never conceive it all, since it is without Bounds: And therefore must all our Thoughts be swallowed up in that Abyss; and consequently we remain as it were annihilated in the Presence of God. What is most wonderful in this is, that the more we humble ourselves before God, the nigher we draw to him. This Adoration is the Band of our Communion with him: It is the Homage the Creature owes God, considered precisely as God. It cannot be paid another than him, without incurring the Guilt of Idolatry; without committing the like Crime with those Adulteresses, who bestow that upon other Men, which they ought to reserve for their own Husbands. And therefore *Idolatry* is called *Adultery* and *Whoredom* in Scripture; and God in forbidding it, declares he is *jealous*. Since then all the Angels are enjoined here to worship *Jesus Christ*, it follows evidently thence that he is God. It is true, that we are to worship him as our Mediator: But in that very respect, he is God, as well as Man: His Office of Mediator cannot be separated from his Divinity; and he could never have exercised it, if he had not been God.

Hence it was, that the Fathers charged the *Arians* with Idolatry; because that though they denied the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*, they pretended to worship him. It is plain, that that Accusation was grounded upon this general Maxim, that it is Idolatry to worship any other than God, the supreme God; for the *Orthodox* own'd no other. What must we think then of the Author so often hinted at here, who is for worshipping *Jesus Christ*, but will not acknowledge him to be the supreme God? Does

! Whiston's Prim. Christianity, Vol. IV. Art. 2. p. 70. N. B. he

he not make himself liable to the same Charge of Idolatry, which he professeth so much to abhor? It is in vain, that to elude it, he distinguishes two sorts of Worship, Supreme, and Subordinate: For that is too near a-kin to the Distinctions of those of the other Communion; and the Scripture makes none such, but says expressly, as to *Jesus Christ*, that all Men should *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. The Truth is, we may put here the Question again, though in another Form, and ask concerning these Men, the Papists, what must we think of them, who denying the blessed Virgin, the Angels, and Saints, and the Images, to be Gods, do notwithstanding assert and pay them Divine Worship? Are they not guilty of Idolatry, and do they not kindle against themselves the Fire of the living God's Jealousy? They distinguish indeed, but likewise in vain, three kinds of Worship, viz. of *Latry*, *Duly*, and *Hyperduly*; Words, God be praised! unknown in our Language; the first supreme, the second lowermost, and the third middling: Acquainting us at the same time, that they pay the supreme Worship only to God, the middling only to the blessed Virgin, and the lowermost to the Angels and Saints; mincing the Matter about the Images. But, 1. they distinguish thus only in their Writings and Discourse, not in their Practice. For what do they perform to the Honour of God, but they do to the Honour of the blessed Virgin, the Angels and Saints? Do they not offer Gifts to these as well as to God? do they not put up Prayers, and make Vows to them, as well as to God? And yet, according to their *Angelical* Doctor, Vows belong to the Worship of *Latry*? 2. The Worship spoken of in the Text, is express'd both in the *Hebrew* and the *Greek*, by a Term which signifies properly to bow down to. It is the same with that in the se-

Tho. Aquin. 2. 2. *Quest.* 88. *Art.* 5.

cond Commandment of the Law, wherein God says concerning Images, *Thou shalt not bow down to them.* Do not the¹ Papists, what God expressly forbids there; do not they bow down to Images? If the *Christians* S. Paul wrote to here had done the same, it must be own'd, his Argument would not have been conclusive to them. His Design being to prove, that *Jesus Christ* was more Excellent than the Angels, he alleges for that purpose, that they are enjoined to bow down to him; for so it is in the Original. Now then if those *Christians* had bowed down daily to the Images, as they of *Rome* do; how easy and obvious would it have been for them to answer, we daily bow down to the Images, which so far from being more Excellent than we, are very much below us? They are dead Things, but we are alive; and none can desire we should become like them, without wishing us a great Misfortune.

There remains but one thing more to be explained, with regard to the Text: Which because it gives me an Opportunity to confute in part the Principles and Practice of our² *Unitarians*, my chief Design in this, and the other *Discourses*; I the more readily embrace. It is ask'd then, why the *Psalmist* bids only the *Angels*, or at most with them only the *Magistrates*, *i. e.* Men raised in Dignity, to worship *Jesus Christ*? Ought not all the Creatures, without exception, to do so? To which I answer, Yes, undoubtedly. For the Apostle tells us expressly, *Philipp. ii. 10, 11.* that *at the Name of Jesus, every Knee ought to bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth*; and that *every Tongue ought to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* But to confine myself at present to the *Psalms*

¹ Vulgus saltem Papistarum. ² Unitarii, Sociniani recentiores. Whiston's Hist. Pref. p. 72. Fos. 2. Append. p. 42. Mr. Thackh. Depos. & N. B. Idem, Vol. IV. Art. 2. pag. 54. to 76. — Append. pag. 1. to 14. & passim.

whence the Passage is taken by *S. Paul*, and to the Passage itself; I say, 1. That the *Psalmist* inculcates there the Worshipping of *Jesus Christ* on all the Creatures in their several Capacities; for from the beginning of it throughout, he represents the *Earth* as *trembling at his Feet*; the *Heavens*, as *declaring his Righteousness*; the *People*, as *contemplating his Glory*; the *Idolaters*, as *confounded*; and *Zion*, i. e. the *Church*, as *rejoicing in him*. But, 2. I think, I may say likewise, that the very Words of the Passage itself, as they are rendred by the *Septuagint*, and quoted by the *Apostle*, engage by Consequence all the Creatures to worship *Jesus Christ* in their respective Ways. There seems to be in them, what they call in the Schools, *Argumentum à majori ad minus*, a Reasoning from the Greater to the Lesser. And it runs thus: If *Jesus Christ* is so high and mighty, that the very Angels, as glorious as they are, are all obliged to worship him; how much more are the other Creatures so, which are much below them! And therefore I add, 3. that it is probably upon that account that the Angels, and if you will, the Magistrates, are chiefly commanded here to worship *Jesus Christ*, because of the Influence of their Example and Authority over the rest of the Creatures. It is true, to speak particularly of the Magistrates, that God is so far raised above Men in general, that if we consider them in respect of him, we can hardly affirm that the one are more considerable than the others. As the Difference of Hills and Valleys is nothing in respect of Heaven, so the Difference of Monarchs, and their meanest Subjects, is much more a pure Nothing in respect of God. But yet God would have the greatest and the most Eminent amongst Men, be the most Careful to worship his Son *Jesus Christ* upon the account of their Influence over others. The higher he has exalted them above their Inferiors, the lower he would have them humble themselves before him. When a Prince has to do with meaner Persons than him.

himself, and whose Example is of no Consequence; he is naturally disposed to be gracious to them, and to remitt something of his just Pretensions in Matters of an indifferent Nature. But if he is to deal with another Prince, or with any one whose Authority is like to draw others in, in things of an indispensable Quality, he will stand upon his strict Right, and think his Glory concerned in yielding any thing of his own. The Case is nigh the same here with God and the Magistrates, in respect of the Worshipping of *Jesus Christ*, bating always the Comparison of Equality between them. God would sooner pardon, I may safely say, an inconsiderable Man some Omission in his Service, than a great one the Neglect of his Son's Worship. He exacts of the High and Mighty either the Homage they owe him, or the Punishment their Ingratitude deserves, if they do not acknowledge their Benefactor. Would to God all Magistrates, and such as are in Power and Credit, would seriously lay this Truth to Heart! For then we should not see them, as we do, so often abuse their Station to their own and others Destruction; as if God had raised them up only to violate his Commands, and corrupt the rest of the World.

We cannot better conclude this *Discourse*, than in contemplating with Admiration, how great is the Glory and Dignity of our Blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ*. He is the First-begotten Son of God, the Heir and Lord of all that belongs to the eternal Father; even by a natural Right: But he is likewise, in the Quality of Mediator, the sovereign Master of those whom the same Father is pleased to own for his Children. The mean Condition wherein he appeared formerly in the World, does not hinder him from being King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; though the *Jews* were ashamed to acknowledge him for their Brother, and instead of that called him *Samaritan*; yet the Father, speaking
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from Heaven, declared him his *beloved Son*, in whom he is well pleased. What Respect and Veneration therefore do we not owe him, who profess ourselves to be *Christians* and Members of his Church! And if the Angels, those pure Spirits, so Holy, and so Glorious, and who are every way such perfect Creatures, shew no Unwillingness, as they are commanded here, to humble themselves in his Presence, and to worship him; how much more are we obliged to do so, and to be carefully and faithfully employed in his Service, we poor Worms of the Earth, who are loaded with Infirmities and Miseries! How much more are we beholden to that Divine Saviour, than are the Angels! It is true, that he is their Creator, and Lord, as he is ours; but he is not their Redeemer, as he is ours: He has not suffered Death for them, as he did for us: He left those under eternal Condemnation, whom Sin had cast into it; whereas he has rescued us out thence at the Expence of all his Blood. And yet, O Prodigy of Ingratitude! those Heavenly Spirits fulfill perfectly his Will, whilst we daily transgress it: They make all their Glory and all their Happiness consist in serving and worshipping him; but we put our whole Delight in offending him hourly. How long shall we continue shameless, and not blush, to excell those very Spirits in a Point of Felicity, and yet fall short of them in Gratitude? How long shall we not be afraid, that they should rise up in Condemnation against us? Forbear we then affronting him, and being rebellious to him, whom all the Angels of God worship: And let us remember, that those that spend their Life in offending him, as they thereby associate themselves with the Devils; so after they have been Partakers with them in their Sins, they shall be likewise Partakers with them in their Plagues. Be we rather therefore from this time forward Followers of the good Angels; adore we our Blessed Lord, as they do; endeavouring to do
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his Will here on Earth, as it is done by them Above in Heaven. And then will that Divine Redeemer, whom the Father sent into the World upon our account, introduce us into Heaven with him, and admitt us into the glorious Society of those happy Spirits; there to eternize our Adoration, and make us Partakers of his infinite Bliss. Which G O D of his infinite Mercy grant!



DIS:



DISCOURSE IX.

The Word made Flesh.

JOHN i. 14. the former Part.

And the Word was made Flesh.



HAT was a wonderful Dream, which the Patriarch Jacob had formerly in Haran ! Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. He apprehended that he saw a Ladder set upon the Earth, whereof the Top reached to Heaven ; that the Angels of God ascended, and descended on it ; and that the Lord standing above it, said to him, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy Father, and the God of Isaac : The Land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed. But we have here in the Text a much more surprizing Ladder ; whereof that which appeared to that holy Man, was but a dark Shadow, and a faint Resemblance ! The Words, as short as they are, join notwithstanding Earth and Heaven
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together: They descend from Heaven even to the Earth; and they shew us the Way we ought to follow, if we will ascend from the Earth even to Heaven. The eternal *Word*, spoken of in the Beginning of this Text, as *ver. 1.* of this Chapter, is raised above all the Heavens. But the *Flesh*, which is mention'd in the End of it, is naturally of the Earth, as we all know. *Jacob* indeed saw the *Angels of God ascending, and descending on the Ladder*, which he conceived in his Dream; but he did not ascend it himself. Whereas we have a Right to use that in the Text for that purpose; because it is given us to introduce us into Heaven. The *Word* of God, *i. e.* God himself, stands above it; and the *Flesh*, *i. e.* Human Nature, our *Flesh*, our Nature is set below it. When the Lord spoke to the Patriarch, he kept as it were in Heaven, and left him on the Earth: But here he abases himself in a manner to come down to us, and exalt us to himself. And he does not say to us, as he did to *Jacob*, *I am the God of Abraham thy Father, and of Isaac*; he does not even simply say to us, *I am your God*: But he tells us, *I am Flesh of your Flesh, Bone of your Bones*; he is not ashamed to call us *Brethren*, and to appear cloathed with the Infirmities of our Nature. He promises us not the Land of *Canaan*, but Heaven; whither he has carried up our Humanity with him by his Ascension, and there prepared a Place for us. In short, the mystical Ladder in the Text is the astonishing Mystery of our blessed Saviour's Incarnation. Let us therefore consider the Words attentively and seriously, for our Instruction and Comfort, and to preserve us from the pernicious Errors, and violent Attempts of its Adversaries.

To this End I shall explain, 1. What is meant here by the Term *Word*; 2. By that of *Flesh*; 3. What is the Sense of this Proposition, *The Word was made Flesh*, as our Evangelist expresses it.

As to the first Thing proposed to be explained, having in a former ¹ *Discourse* given the Sense of the Term *Word*, as far as I was able; and shew'd in some measure, that it was neither new or extraordinary; nor derived from the *Platonists*, as it is pretended; I think it will be more proper for me here to enquire into the Reasons why S. *John* uses it, and thereby gain a farther Light into this Matter, which is now so much controverted amongst us. 1. Then the Design of the Evangelist in the former Part of this Chapter, being to oppose some Hereticks of his time, who denied the Divinity and Eternity of *Jesus Christ*; he chose to employ a Term, which was used amongst them, and thereby set forth the true Doctrine concerning the Person it signified. He is generally supposed to have written his Gospel ² when he was above ninety Years old, viz. about the sixty fifth after our Lord's Passion. *Cerinthus* and *Ebion* had then spread their Venom amongst the Jewish Converts of the Christian Church: And besides their Followers, there were the Disciples of *Simon Magus*, and others, who blending the *Platonic* Philosophy with some *Christian* Doctrines, made a monstrous kind of Religion, by putting the *Word* in the Number of their false Deities. It was therefore fitting, that whom they ignorantly or wrongfully worship'd, he and his true Nature should be declared unto them, by his known and proper Appellation. Which is much the same Account the Fathers give of this Matter, particularly ³ S. *Jerom*; that S. *John* wrote that Book against these pernicious Errors, *Adversus Cerinthum, aliosque Hereticos, & maxime tunc Ebionitarum dogma consurgens.*

¹ *Discourse V. on John i. 1.*

² Epiph. Hær. 51. Chrys. Serm. de S. Joh. Tom. VI.

³ Hieron. Catal. Script. Lat. Proem. in Matth.

But, 2. another Reason may be assigned, why *S. John* made use of the Title of *Word* upon this Occasion; he might have a Design to rectify the Notions of those that were *without*, as well as of those that pretended to be *within* the Pale of the *Christian Church*. Tho' the Mystery of the Trinity was revealed to the *Jews* in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as far as God thought proper for that time, and it was necessary for them to know; yet the Learned Men amongst them would be *wise above what was written*, and search the Books of the Philosophers. This made *Philo*, though he retains the right Name of the Second Person, which was common with them, and 'calls him God, nay, describes him in his Writings with nigh the same Characters as we have him in this Chapter, unless it be that in the Text: This made *Philo*, I say, style him wrong the *Second God*, on *Gen. i. 26.* where he tells us, that God speaks of, ² and *πρὸς τὸν δευτέρον Θεόν, ὃς ἔστιν ἐκείνῳ λόγῳ*, *who is his Word*. I need not produce other Instances of this nature amongst his contemporary or latter *Jews*. To check therefore these growing Errors of his philosophizing Countrymen, the Evangelist shews them, that *Jesus Christ* was he of whom their Prophets and Doctors had spoken. And the better to win them over, uses a Term which was familiar to them, and was withal the fittest to express his Nature by, *viz.* that of the *Word*.

And, 3. the Holy Penman may be supposed to have had a farther Aim in this, even to draw in by this means the Learned Men amongst the *Heathens*, as well as amongst the *Jews*, to the Knowledge of *Jesus Christ*. Several of the former, long before the Coming of our Saviour, had said and written many things concerning the *Word* of God. ³ *Orpheus, ex.*

¹ Apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. L. iii. c. 13.

² Idem, L. vii. c. 13.

³ Vide Laët. Lib. iv. de Verâ Sap. Du Pleſſis de la verité, &c. Chap. 6. & Jac. Cap. in locum.

gr. who was one of the ancientest Poets amongst the Grecians, and consequently one of their mystical Divines, (to say nothing of *Mercurius Trismegistus* amongst the Egyptians, and *Zoroaster* amongst the Chaldeans) tells us, amongst other things, that the Word made the World; that it is Immortal, Perfect in itself, and the Perfecter of all things. *Pythagoras*, a great Admirer of him, that the Word is God, and a Son of *Jupiter*. *Zeno*, and other *Stoicks* after him, that the Word is God, and that it is the Author of all things. But *Plato*, who was surnamed the Divine amongst the Heathens, says expressly, that each Star runs its Course according to the Order it has received from the Word; which he styles most Divine, Son of the Good, and wholly like him. If it be wonder'd at, how Heathens came to speak so clearly, and to deliver things so much resembling those we read in Holy Scripture; we must know, that the Grecians learn'd this Doctrine from the Egyptians, as these had learn'd it from the Jews, whereof several had a long time sojourn'd in Egypt, not only in the time of the Patriarchs, but a great while after, viz. during the Babylonish Captivity. *Orpheus*, whom I mention'd first, acquaints us himself, that he had gone to *Memphis*, and the Cities along the Nile, to seek the Knowledge of the Mysteries, i. e. of Religion. *Pythagoras*, as we are informed by *Strabo*, had travelled into *Judea* itself, where he had dwelt on Mount *Carmel*; and one of his Disciples owns, that he had learned much out of the Law of *Moses*. Whatever it be, it is certain, that this Beginning of *S. John's* Gospel, wherein he so often uses the Name Word, contributed not a little to bring over several Philosophers to *Jesus Christ*, especially of those who followed *Plato's* Doctrine. Even those who were not thereby converted, admired notwithstanding the Expressions of the Evangelist. One of them was so taken with the first Verses of this Gospel, as to declare openly, that they deserved to be written in

Letters of Gold upon the Frontispieces of all the Temples. And another having read them by chance, cried out to this effect, swearing by his God; *This Barbarian*, (for so he called S. John) *this Barbarian*, said he, *is of the Opinion of my Master Plato; he puts the Word in the Number of the Principles of all things!* Which was the Reason that several of the *Platonists*, who lived after the Apostles, transcribed in their Writings some Passages of this first Chapter of the Gospel of S. John. Having therefore in his View the Conversion of the *Heathens*, after that of the *Jews*, he was very well grounded to use a Term which was likewise familiar to them.

But it is time to come to our second Part: Having therefore meditated, as far as we are warranted by Scripture, upon the eternal *Word*; let us look down into ourselves, and consider our own *Flesh*; *The Word*, says the Evangelist, *i. e. Jesus Christ, was made Flesh*. Which Term of *Flesh* is taken in three different Senses in Holy Writ: 1. For Humane Nature, or Man simply; as when it is said *Gen. vi. 12.* that *all Flesh had corrupted his Way upon the Earth*, *i. e.* all Men; that *by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in God's Sight*; *i. e.* no Man shall be justified that way, *Rom. iii. 20.* and elsewhere. The Learned observe, that it is a very common Form of speaking in the *Arabick* Tongue. 2. For Humane Nature corrupted with Sin, or the Fountain of all our disorderly Affections: In which Sense it is so often understood in Scripture, that I think it would be superfluous to multiply Examples to shew it. S. Paul doubtless meaneth it so, *Rom. viii. 7.* where he tells us, that *the carnal Mind is Enmity against God*, *i. e.* the *φρόνημα σαρκός*, the *Wisdom*, or *Affection* of the *Flesh*. 3. For Humane Nature infirm, languishing, subject to Misery, Diseases, and Death itself. As

when the same Apostle declares, 1 Cor. xv. 50. that *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption*; i. e. that we must come out of this carnal and frail Condition, and be delivered from our Wretchedness and Mortality, before we can be fit to be received into Heaven. It is plain, that the second Acceptation of *Flesh*, as it denotes the Corruption of Sin, cannot have place in our Text. That Corruption, either Original or Actual, can have no Fellowship with the eternal *Word*; the Son of God is Holiness itself: *What Communion can Light have with Darkeness? And what Concord can Christ have with Belial?* But as to the two other Significations of that Term, they may very well be joined together here, and applied to the Subject it is affirmed of, as I shall now do distinctly and severally.

1. Then *the Word was made Flesh*, i. e. *Jesus Christ* was made Man simply and absolutely: For the *Flesh*, as I have already proved, implies the whole Humane Nature, or the whole Man, consisting of Body and Soul, and not Part of it. So that we must not imagine with *Apollinarius*, and his modern Followers, that the Son of God took upon him only our meer *Flesh*, i. e. our Body without our Soul; and without uniting them together into one Person with him. What Likelihood is there, that the Son of God intending to be a Man, as it is agreed on both Sides, should take only the less considerable Part of Humane Nature; only that which is Earthy, Animal, Carnal, i. e. the Body; without taking also the Soul, which is Heavenly, Rational, Spiritual? He would not have been truly Man, if he had not had a Soul like ours; it having been always look'd upon to be a necessary essential Part of Man's Nature and Definition, that he should have a Rational Soul. It is

¹ Brocklesby's Gospel-Tritheism, L. 6. c. 8. §. 4. pag. 920, 921, 922.

therefore to very little purpose, ¹ that our modern *Apollinarist* endeavoureth to revive, as he pretends, the ancient Division of a Man into three Parts; the Spirit, or Rational and Divine Part; the Soul, or Sensitive Part; and the Body, or Fleshly Part. For be that as it will, let there be in Man a Spirit, and a Soul, or two Souls, if he will; for why not a Vegetative, as well as a Sensitive Part? Since *Jesus Christ* was to be a Man, why must he be deprived of any one of the Essentials of his Composition, and that the most considerable too, *viz.* the Rational? The Reason is, that after our Author has laboured hard by several Passages of Scripture, nothing to his purpose; and some Quotations out of the Fathers, to confirm that ancient Division of Man; the same Fathers tell him in effect, or he makes them say, that it is not sound Philosophy; or if it be, that nevertheless the Man *Christ Jesus* is without a Rational Soul or Spirit, but that its Place is supplied by the Word. But to go on in this Matter by pertinent Scriptures, and the Philosophy it teaches us concerning it; we need only cast our Eyes upon the Accounts we meet there of our Creation and Dissolution, to know what Parts we are made of, ² in order to stop the Mouth of this and the like Innovators. *Moses* then, proceeding in his History of the Creation of the World, gives us this summary Account of that of Man, *Gen. ii. 7.* *And the Lord God formed Man of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul.* Where we have the two chief Ingredients of our Being mentioned, and no more, *viz.* our Body, under the Title of the *Dust of the Ground*; and our Soul, under that of the *Breath of Life*. Conformably to which *Solomon* describing our Dissolution, *Eccl. xii. 7.* reduces our whole Frame into two

¹ Whiston's *Primit. Christian.* Vol. IV. p. 262. — 271.

² Whist, *Prim. Christian.* Vol. IV. Art. 15. p. 272. — 296.

Parts, viz. *Dust* and *Spirit*, Body and Rational Soul, and no more. Then, says he, *shall the Dust return to the Earth as it was; and the Spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* Our Blessed Saviour therefore being Man as well as God; and moreover coming into the World to redeem us whole, both our Bodies and Souls: It was necessary he should have not only a Humane Body, but likewise a Humane Soul, to execute that Design. It is true, our Adversaries pretend, that the Word was in *Jesus Christ*, instead of the Rational Soul or Spirit; and that he suffered in his Divine Nature: But how absurd and unaccountable this is, to say no worse of it; let the common Sense of Mankind determine. And how will they evade the Force of those several Places in Scripture, wherein he is called our *Brother*, which he plainly cannot be, if he wants the chief Part of our Humane Nature? Or what Interpretation will they put upon those, wherein he is said to have been made *like unto us in all things, Sin only excepted*, if he had not a Soul or Spirit like ours? But to put this Point out of all Controversy, *Jesus Christ* himself tells us expressly, *Matth. xxvi. 38.* that he had a Soul: *My Soul*; says he to his Disciples, *is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death.* And the same he recommends and delivers up to God upon the Cross, *Luke xxiii. 46. Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit: And having said thus, he gave up the Ghost.* So little Reason has this, or any other Reviver of old Heresies, to value himself upon finding out, or improving the contrary Doctrine!

But perhaps it will be urged here, that *S. John* would have spoken more clearly and strongly against this Heretical Opinion, if he had said, that the *Word* was made *Man*. To which I must reply, that he had another Reason to express himself as he has done. The Spirit by which he was directed in

writing, foresaw another Error would arise in the Church, no less pernicious than the before-mentioned; and therefore moved him to use the Word *Flesh*. This was the Heresy of *Marcion*, *Manes*, and other like Impostors in the following Ages; who impudently maintained, that our blessed Saviour had not taken a true real Body, but only the Appearance of one, *i. e.* a Phantasm, and were therefore called *Δοκῆσαι*. Which Agents of the Devil intended by that means to overthrow the whole Work of our Redemption; destroying thereby the Truth of the Death of *Jesus Christ*; turning all the Actions of his Life into so many Illusions; and consequently charging him with Lying, when he said to his Disciples, *Behold my Hands, and my Feet, that it is I myself: Handle me, and see, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have*; Luke xxiv. 39. Wherefore the Evangelist spoke rightly, *The Word was made Flesh*; it assumed our Flesh, a true Body, and not a Phantasm.

And not only so, but, 2. *The Word was made Flesh* in the third Sense, *i. e.* *Jesus Christ*, for our sake, took upon him our Nature, attended with all the Infirmities, Miseries, and even Death, Sin subjected it to. *S. John* was well grounded, not to put in the Term *Man* in this place; which is a Title of Honour amongst the Creatures. Man is the most excellent of them all here below. God constituted him Lord and Master of the Animal World; his Soul bears the Image of God, and is of Heavenly Extraction. And therefore the Scripture does not ordinarily give him the Name of *Flesh*, but when it would humble him. The *Flesh* is the least considerable Part of us; the Beasts may bear that Name as well as we: It is of an Earthy and Animal Nature, weak and frail, subject to a multitude of Evils, and in Man stained with the Filth of Sin. The Evangelist then tells us, that the *Word* was made *Flesh*, to let us know, that the Son of God in assuming our Nature, did partake of the same

same lumpish and gross Flesh with ours; a Flesh made of the Substance of the blessed Virgin; a Flesh attended with the same Infirmities as ours is, of Hunger, Thirst, Weariness, and exposed to the same Pains and Sufferings. Not an Aerial or Celestial Flesh, as *Apelles* and his Disciples dream'd formerly: Nor much less a Flesh infected with Sin; for that was absolutely impossible, as I intimated before; but yet loaded with all the non-vicious Infirmities, which Sin causes in other Men. He bare the Image of Sinners, tho' without Sin; as the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness did that of other Serpents, tho' it had not their Venom: He underwent in his own Body the Punishment of our Sins, he groan'd under that heavy Burden, and at last suffer'd the ignominious Death of the Cross.

Such are the two things *S. John* joins together in our Text; viz. the *Word*, and the *Flesh*. But who can set forth the infinite Difference there is between the one and the other? The *Word* is raised from all Eternity above the Heavens; but the *Flesh* creepeth upon the Earth from a pointed Time! The *Word* is formed of the proper Substance of God, but the *Flesh* is made of a little Dust! The *Word* is the great Power of God, but the *Flesh* is Infirmity itself! The *Word* is essentially immortal, but the *Flesh* naturally tendeth to Corruption! Who would have thought, that two things so infinitely different, could ever be joined together? We do not wonder to see two Bodies united; because we know, that to effect that, it is but joining their Extremities one to the other. The Union of our Bodies with our Souls, is indeed above the Reach of our Understanding; because they are two things vastly different, and even opposite in several respects. But then at least, the Body and the Soul are Creatures; the Body and the Soul are finite. Whereas here the *Word* is the Creator, who made all things; and the *Flesh* is but one of the meanest of his Creatures. The *Word* is infinite, for it

is God himself; and the *Flesh* is limited to very narrow Bounds. But yet the Evangelist tells us by way of Proposition, *The Word was made Flesh*; the Sense whereof I am now in the third place to explain.

The Divines, to illustrate this Matter, and raise some Idea of the Mystery of the Incarnation of the *Word* in the Minds of the People, have employed various Similitudes to set it forth. Some have compared the Hypostatical Union, or that whereby the Divine and Humane Nature in *Jesus Christ* are joined together into one Person, to that Union whereby are likewise joined together our Souls and Bodies; which, as I said but now, are of two different Natures. Others to that which is observable between the Iron and the Fire, in a red-hot Sword coming out of the Furnace. Others to that between the Body of the Sun and its Light. Others to that of two Slips of divers kinds grafted upon the same Stock. But these several Comparisons can afford no great Help towards the Understanding of this Mystery; they are all defective in many respects. And therefore others, thinking to hit the Mark better, have try'd the Similitude of the Words which come out of our Mouths. There are in those Words two things united, as it is justly observed, *viz.* the Sound of the Voice, and the Sense they imply: The former proceeds out of the Mouth, the latter out of the Mind. And these two things may be one without the other: The Sound may be without the Sense, as in an inarticulate Voice; the Sense likewise may be without any Sound, *viz.* in our Mind, and in that of other Men. Nevertheless, in the Words of a wise Man, these two things are never separated. Even so, say they, there are two things united in *Jesus Christ*, the Divine, and the Humane Nature. The Divine Nature may be without the Humane; as it is in the Father, and in the Holy Ghost. The Humane Nature may be without the Divine; as it is in effect in all Men, excepting the Man *Christ Jesus*. But in him
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are these two things become inseparable by the Incarnation. Notwithstanding, this Comparison falls short of the Mystery, as well as the others.

Setting then aside these Similitudes and Comparisons, let us take in few Words the Account the Scripture gives us of this Matter, without pretending to what we cannot know of ourselves. It was then the Father's good Pleasure, that the Son should come into the World, to redeem us from that Death, which we had deserved by our Sins. To this End it was necessary, that the Son should be Man, without being Sinner; because as such he would have been incapable to satisfy the Divine Justice for us. And therefore the Father, by the miraculous and immediate Operation of the Holy Ghost, purified and sanctified the Substance of the blessed Virgin, whereof he made the Body of our Lord. He gave him an all-pure and holy Soul; which being joined with a Body likewise pure and holy, preserved that noble Crown of Original Righteousness, which the others lose, by participating of the Corruption of their Bodies, as soon as they begin to animate them. Lastly, he united to the eternal *Word* that Humane Nature, which is like unto ours in all things, Sin only excepted. He joined the Divinity and Humanity so inseparably the one with the other, that they make but one and the same Person; the Divinity subsisting of itself, and the Humanity in it. Which is what the Holy Scripture, the Analogy of Faith, and all Orthodox Antiquity, teach us upon this Subject. We know the thing, but are ignorant of the Manner. Apposite to this is that Answer of *S. Chrysostom*, "I know that the Word was made Flesh; but how that was done, I know not: Dost thou wonder, that I know it not?" adds the Father; "all the Creatures are ignorant of it."

All that we can, or ought to do upon this Occasion, is to admire with a profound Veneration the

surprizing Effects of that Divine Master-piece of Work, which is a Fountain of Wonders. ¹ For it is by vertue of the Incarnation, that the things which belong only to God, are attributed to Man; and that those which are peculiar to Man, may be affirmed of God. It is in consequence of it, that we may truly say, that God is Man; and that a Man, *i. e.* Jesus Christ, is God; that the Son of Man is eternal, and the Son of God was born in the Fulness of Time; that the Son of Man is immortal, and the Son of God has suffered Death. Moreover, that the Son of God is our Brother according to the Flesh, and the Son of *Mary* is God over all, blessed for ever; that the Son of God descended into the Grave, and the Son of Man has ascended above the Heavens. It is the Incarnation gives our Nature so mighty an Advantage, even above the Angels. *For verily*, says *S. Paul*, *Hebr. ii. 16.* *Jesus took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham.* He assumed not the Angelical, but the Humane Nature. The Angels cannot say, as we do, *Emmanuel*, *i. e.* God with us; they cannot with us call *Jesus Christ* their Brother. “Is it not a thing infinitely astonishing,” says the same ² *S. Chrysostom*, “that our Flesh “should sit above; that it should be worship’d by the “Angels, and Archangels, the Cherubins, and Seraphins?” To all which we may add, that by the means of the Incarnation, Humane Nature has concurr’d in some sort with the Son of God in the wonderful Work of our Salvation; the Creature has in a Sense shared the Glory of it with the Creator. If the Humane Nature could not redeem us without the Divine; neither could the Divine Nature, with Respect be it spoken, do it without the Humane. If it was necessary that our Saviour should be God, that his Sufferings might be of infinite Value; it was like-

¹ Whist. Prim. Christian. Vol. IV. p. 294, 5. Ibidem, Art. 16. p. 297. — 321.

² Chrysost.

wise necessary that he should be Man, that he might be capable to suffer. If it was necessary that he should be God, that he might be able to overcome Death; it was likewise necessary that he should be Man, that he might die. Lastly, if it was necessary that he should be God, that he might have Power to convert us, to raise us up at the last Day, and to introduce us into Heaven; it was likewise necessary that he should be Man, that his Merit might be imputed to us, and we might by his Means obtain the Spirit of Grace, which fulfills these things in us.

But it is easier to confute the Heresies that have risen against the Mystery of the Incarnation, than to explain the Manner of it. Let us then observe here,

1. that we must beware of affirming, as *Nestorius*, Bishop of *Constantinople*, formerly did; that in *Jesus Christ* the two Natures are separated the one from the other: Whereby he made two Persons of one in him. He pretended, that the blessed Virgin could not be styled the *Mother of God*; and that it could not be said, that the *Jews* crucified the Son of God; fancying with himself, that they had crucified but the Son of *Mary*, i.e. the Humane Nature of *Jesus Christ*, which he considered as a separate Person. By which means he divided *Jesus Christ* into two Persons; forgetting what *S. Paul* says, *1 Tim. ii. 5. There is one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* And therefore he was condemned by the Synod of *Ephesus*, being the third General Council.
2. We must likewise carefully avoid the Error of *Eutyches*; who being a Presbyter of the same Church of *Constantinople*, and striving to go as far as he could from the preceding Opinion, fell into the opposite Extreme, equally dangerous. Going about to confute *Nestorius*, who divided the Person of *Jesus Christ*, he confounded his two Natures into one; saying, that the Humane Nature had been swallowed up by the Divine; whence it would have followed, that *Jesus Christ* had not been Man, against the whole

Tenor

Tenor of the New Testament. And therefore was he likewise condemned by the fourth General Council, which met at *Chalcedon*. 3. Nor must we imagine, as did the *Acephali* and others, that *Jesus Christ* had but one Nature, composed of the Humane and Divine, blended together; or that their respective Properties were confounded. It is impossible that the Divine Nature, all-perfect as it is, should come into the Composition of any thing: The two Natures ever remain distinct, with their several Properties, tho' joined together inseparably. 4 Neither much less must we conceive, as did the *Valentinians*, and some others, that the *Word*, the eternal *Word*, i. e. the Son of God, was changed into *Flesh*. *The Word was God*, says our Evangelist, *ver. 1.* and consequently essentially immutable.

It must be confess'd, that the Words of our Text seem at the first Hearing to favour this last Opinion. For if there be in Scripture an Expression which implies a Change of Substance, in relation to *Jesus Christ*, would not one think, at first Sight, that it is this, *The Word was made Flesh*? And therefore the ancient *Hereticks* were never wanting in objecting it continually to the *Orthodox* of their time; and that with as much Noise, as they of *Rome* do every Minute to us, upon their pretended substantial Change in the Eucharist, those Words of our Saviour, *This is my Body*. And how much more Noise would they make, if he had express'd himself upon that Occasion, as *S. John* does here? If he had said, *This Bread is made my Body*. They would then fancy, that nothing could be answer'd them. But let them mind attentively, how the *Orthodox* answer'd those ancient *Hereticks*; and they will see, that though *Jesus Christ* had express'd himself so, we should be still in the right, to answer them as we do. When the *Hereticks* alledged those Words, *The Word was made Flesh*, to prove the Change of the eternal *Word* into *Flesh*, i. e. into the Humane Nature; the *Orthodox* shewed them presently, that that was absolutely impos-

impossible; that God could not change himself; and that thence it would follow, that the Deity had suffered Death, which cannot be uttered without Blasphemy. What did the *Hereticks* return thereto? Why, they ran to the Omnipotence of God; *Nothing*, said they, *is impossible to him; he might then change his Word into Flesh.* But to this one of the ancient Fathers replies judiciously, that "the Will of God" is necessarily conformable to his Nature, and that "it can incline him to nothing that is contrary to it: That to affirm that his Will requires one thing, and his Nature another, is to set his Will at Variance with his Nature." The *Heretick* opposing to that, that it is said, *The Word was made Flesh*; "we must, goes he on, take the Words, and not enquire too nicely what they signify." But the *Orthodox* thereupon stoppeth his Mouth, by telling him, "When thou fittest to eat with a Ruler, it is the Counsel of the wise Man, Consider diligently what is before thee; so we must not take in the Word of God the Terms without their Sense; but must consider diligently what is suitable to God, proper for us; what may be true; what agrees with the Law, and with the Glory of God." I might make here a particular Application of this, to the Method between the *Romanists* and us, upon the Subject of Transubstantiation; but it would carry me too far beyond my Text.

Conclude we therefore this *Discourse*, 1. in admiring the Expedient which the Divine Wisdom was pleased to use, in order to rescue us out of the Abyss of the eternal Condemnation, and to call us to the Hope of the blessed Immortality. *Adam*, in transgressing the Commandment, thought he should attain unto the Sovereign Happiness by gratifying his aspiring Mind: He would become equal with God, being seduced by the Speech of the Serpent, who had told *Eve*, that *in the Day they should eat of the*

forbidden Fruit, they would be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil. But on the contrary, it has proved necessary to make us happy, that *Jesus Christ* being God, should render himself like unto us, and partake of our Nature, by taking Part of Flesh and Blood with us. The first Man dreaming to raise himself very high, threw himself down into the Bottomless Pit, and his Posterity with him: But our gracious Saviour, by descending to our Nothing, and assuming our miserable Nature, has infinitely exalted us. For this only begotten Son of God, this eternal Word, was made Flesh; not indeed that we that are Flesh should become Gods, which is impossible; but at least that we might be Partakers of the Divine Nature. He came down from Heaven, to lift us up from the Earth; he was willing to bear the Name of the Son of Man, that we might be dignified with the glorious Title of the Children of God: For as *S. John* tells us a little before our Text, *To as many as received him, gave he Power, or the Right and Privilege, to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* He submitted to carry the Infirmities and Miseries of our Nature, that he might cloathe us one Day with Immortality and Incorruption, whereby we shall be transform'd into God's Image. He took Part of our Flesh and Blood, that our Bodies, as Carnal as they are, might at last become Spiritual and Heavenly. What is more worthy our Admiration, our Meditation, and the whole Attention of our Minds, than this? *Socrates* observing formerly, that the Philosophers of his Time applied themselves wholly to the Contemplation of the Heavens and the Stars, told them roundly, that *what is above us, is nothing to us*; intimating thereby, that they should rather study their Minds, and the Vertues they were to follow. But tho' *Jesus Christ* be infinitely raised above us, and above all the Heavens, the same thing may not be objected to us, if we contemplate the Mystery of his Incarnation. It

is true, that he is immensely higher exalted above the Heavens, than the Heavens are above our Heads, but yet he is very nearly related to us; he is our Brother, he is *Bone of our Bones, and Flesh of our Flesh*; he has made himself like unto us. O wonderful and incomprehensible Mystery! which joins together a Sovereign Majesty with Reproach itself; a Sovereign Power with very Weakness; a Sovereign Dignity with our Natural Meanness! What is more glorious than God? what is more contemptible than Man? what is mightier than God? what is weaker than Man? what is nobler than God? what is baser than Man? And yet God and Man are united together in one and the same Person! O infinite Goodness of God! who knowing that we could not ascend to him, was pleased to descend to us. O the Depth of the Riches of his Wisdom! who to deliver us from Death, has found out a Means, which if he had not revealed, would never have enter'd into the Heart of Men, or even of Angels.

But, 2. let us remember, that it is not enough that we should admire the Wonders God has displayed in the Incarnation of his Son: The Devil himself cannot abstain from doing so; and yet he is so far from reaping any Advantage by it, that he finds it to be the Ruin of his Empire. We must then embrace that Mystery with a true and a lively Faith. The Knowledge we may have of it, ought to kindle in our Hearts the sacred Fire of his Love, a Zeal for his Glory, and a fervent Desire of pleasing him in all things. That gracious Redeemer was pleased for a Time to leave Heaven for our sake; and shall we refuse to renounce the World and Worldly Things for his? To come and seek us, he was willing to divest himself of that eternal Glory which he had with the Father before the World was made; and shall we refuse to give over our sensual Pleasures, to resist our Lusts, and carnal Passions, that we may obey his Commands? If he was content to bear our Infirmi-

ties, shall we refuse to take his Yoke upon us, which is so easy; and his Burden, which is so light? Would not then our Ingratitude be as prodigious, as his Incarnation is wonderful! If we carefully practise these things, we shall savingly partake of all the Fruits of our Lord's Incarnation. As he came down from Heaven to us, to take part of our Infirmities, so will he lift us up from the Earth to him Above, to make us Partakers of his Glory; and then and there shall we behold with our own Eyes that Flesh which the Son of God assumed, and wherein he suffered for our Salvation: Yet we shall not see it gross and lumpish, such as it was, whilst he lived here below; but subtle, spiritual, a thousand times brighter than the Sun, and casting those Rays upon us, whereof the lively Splendor shall penetrate us without dazzling us, and shall transform us all into the same Image, from Glory to Glory. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant!





DISCOURSE X.

The Spirit of Truth a Divine Person.

JOHN xiv. 16, 17,

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever : Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.



Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour, had intimated to his Disciples in the Close of the preceding Chapter, that he was to be shortly from them ; Little Children, yet a little while I am with you, and whither I go, ye cannot come ; ver. 33. But this is a hard Saying to them ; who can hear it ? They were all troubled at the News, and did not know how to

moderate their Grief. He was their Sun, which directed them thro' the Darkness of their Life; they cannot bear the Thought of being deprived of its Light: He was their Father, who provided them with whatever they stood in need of; they will not let him go, unless he leave them his Blessing behind him. And therefore, as a good Physician, after he has discovered the Nature of a Disease, endeavours to apply the proper Remedies: So he having acquainted them, that it was necessary for him, and expedient for them, that he should be absent from them in Body; he proceeds to comfort them thereupon in this manner. First, he assures them, that provided they believe in him, their Conditions will never be miserable: *Verily, verily*, says he unto them, *ver. 12. of this Chapter, he that believeth on me, the Works that I do, shall he do also; and greater Works than these shall he do; i. e. greater in Number, not in themselves.* But tho' this Consolation was admirable, and might have been sufficient to appease the Troubles of their Minds; because they might judge thence, that it would be his Power which should act by them, and his invisible Presence which should attend them; yet was he not therewith content; he gives them a Second: For he goes on, *ver. 13, 14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my Name, I will do it.* But as the Graces of the *Heathens* were represented holding one another by the Hand, so the Mercies of God to his Children are like so many Rings in a Chain which are link'd one with another; for to these two he adds a Third: He tells them in the Words of my Text, *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

This

This is the primary and general Occasion of the Text, and of the other Passages I have cited thereupon; but if we look into the Context, and the Words immediately going before, with which these are connected by the Particle *And*, we shall find, that there is a secondary and particular one, according to which they are likewise to be explained. That Part of the Context runs thus, *viz.* ver. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments; whereupon follows, And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* The Sense whereof, with reference to those two Occasions, may be set forth in this manner by Way of Paraphrase.

In these Words *Jesus Christ* teaches his Disciples, and in them the Catholick Church throughout all Ages, even us who live at this Distance from the first Propagation of the *Christian* Religion, and upon whom the Ends of the World are come; that it is in vain for any Men to profess themselves *Christians*, Members of the Church, or *Christ's* Disciples, or to pretend truly to love him as their Lord and Master, unless they are careful to know, and diligent to practise all those Duties he has enjoined them in his Gospel. And that none may complain of this as too difficult and unreasonable, inconsistent with the Infirmities of Flesh and Blood, and incompatible with the Corruptions of Human Nature, fallen from its Primitive Integrity; he presently adds, that he would send them one who should supply all their Defects; which was no more than necessary for the Comfort of the Disciples, who were soon to be deprived of his gracious Presence amongst them, and would have need of all his Encouragement to keep up their drooping Spirits, to animate their Zeal, and even to preserve them in their Faith and Af-

fection to him the *Messias*; whom, instead of a glorious Prince, they saw persecuted to Extremity; And likewise of all *Christians*, in all Times and Places; who, if left to themselves, are unable to think a good Thought, much less to perform an acceptable Obedience; and are liable to many and various Tryals.

The Titles given this Mighty one in the Text, informed the Disciples, and do all *Christians*, who he is, and what he performs in the Work of Salvation, *viz.* those of the *Spirit of Truth*, and of Holiness, which is essential to it in him; and of the *Comforter*, by Eminency, or the Advocate, as best answering the Term in the Original. In a word, it is God the Holy Ghost who had disposed the Minds of the Disciples for the embracing of the Gospel, and enabled them to work some Miracles; and would after our Lord's Ascension be sent to them, as in effect he was, to clear up some Things which they were not fully apprized of before; to make them understand some Mysteries whereof they were not capable till then, and to endue them with all necessary Power to confirm the Doctrine which they should preach; to overthrow the *Jewish* Synagogue, and to build up the *Christian* Church upon the Ruins of it. The same who by his Truth should lead in to and strengthen all *Christians*, of all Ages and Countries, in the fundamental and necessary Articles of the Faith, and should enlighten their Understandings to apprehend, know, and embrace them; and by his Holiness should sanctify their Wills, and purify their Affections from those Worldly and Carnal Lusts, which hinder Men from receiving him, *because they see him not, neither know him*; and moreover, as their Advocate, should plead their Cause before God and Human Magistrates; help them in their Prayers, and intercede with the Father for them; exhort and instruct them in all their Doubts

Doubts and Difficulties; and comfort them in all their Fears and Distresses.

Moreover, *Jesus Christ* lets the Disciples understand, that this Advocate or Comforter would abide with them for ever; for he dwelt with them, and should be in them. The Meaning whereof is, that his Abode with them should not be temporary, and of short Continuance, as the Father's Will, and the Gospel OEconomy required his own Presence amongst them to be; but perpetual, constant, and lasting. And indeed his Mission could not be otherwise; his Office, and the Necessities of the Church, which without his Influence cannot subsist, much less be preserved in Unity, Purity, and Holiness, requiring, that he should never withdraw his Presence from them, but abide with them to the End. And this to enable them to propagate the *Christian* Religion throughout all the Nations of the Earth; to establish amongst them a Sacred Authority, a Royal Priesthood; which should continue by a perpetual Succession, till the Consummation of all things. This Priesthood to sanctify the Faithful in the Laver of Regeneration; to direct and assist them in their Prayers, and all other Religious Duties; to render the Eucharistical Sacrifice effectual to those Purposes for which *Christ* instituted it, viz. to be to them an Assurance of the Remission of their Sins, and a Pledge of Immortality; and to deliver to them the Word of God, and confirm them in it; that they should not be like Children toss'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine. In a word, all Christians to submit to it to the End of the World; and to be influenced, directed, and guided by that Spirit.

But upon the whole it is observable, that this Comforter, or Advocate, and Spirit, was to be sent by the Father, not excluding *Jesus Christ*, as we shall see anon; and that he is another than he, not the same.

From

From the Words thus paraphrased and explained, I shall endeavour to prove, 1. That this Spirit of Truth and Holiness is properly God: *Even the Spirit of Truth.* 2. That he is a Person distinct from *Jesus Christ* and the Father: *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.* 3. I shall consider him in his Office, as he is a second Comforter, or Advocate; a *Paraclete* according to the Original. 4. With regard to the Perpetuity of his Ministration on Earth: *That he may abide with you for ever.*

As to the first Thing I am to prove, that the Spirit of Truth is properly God; having done it already in a good measure, as I conceive, in one of the foregoing *Discourses*, to which I refer the Reader; I shall confine myself here to what the Text affords to that purpose; and add some few other Proofs, to make up the Argument, which may have been omitted before. *Jesus Christ* then, to leave his Disciples no room to doubt whether the Comforter, whom he would pray the Father to give them, to supply his Place, and to guide the Faithful in his Absence, were able to perform it, tells them here expressly, who he is: Not an Angel, or an Archangel, or any other created Being, how excellent soever it may be imagined. For indeed none of these can possibly be sufficient for the Renovation of Humane Nature, in its present fallen State; it equally requiring a Divine Power now to renew or regenerate Man, as at first to imprint God's Image upon his Soul; or even to create him, as to both Parts of his Composition. Nor for the Administration of the Spiritual Kingdom of *Christ*, his Church; a no less absolutely supreme Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence, being necessary for that, than to make, preserve, and govern the Natural World. But *the*

Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity. Now, that he is properly God, may be fairly inferr'd from his being called here the *Spirit of Truth*: For that is said not only in respect of his Office, which is to *guide us into all Truth*, as *Chap. xvi. 13.* but absolutely, as he is the Fountain of whatsoever is true, even Truth itself. Likewise from his being named the *Holy Spirit*, or of *Holiness*, as in several Texts; not only because he sanctifies the Faithful, but chiefly as he is essentially Holy, and the Author of whatsoever is so in the World. And from his being styled the *Spirit of Glory*, as *1 Pet. iv. 14.* as to whom all Glory and Honour is to be ascribed. All which Titles are so peculiar to the Deity, that he must be God, whoever bears them.

But nothing, it seems, will satisfy our 'Adversaries, unless we produce to them Passages of Scripture, wherein the Holy Ghost is directly called God, or Lord: And even then they distinguish it into the Supreme and Subaltern Gods; the one existing from all Eternity, and the others meer Creatures made they know not when. Now to gratify their Humour once more, I will endeavour to find out such Texts as they cannot with any Modesty gainsay, or resist the Evidence of. *Jesus Christ* tells his Disciples here, that they *know the Spirit of Truth, because he dwelleth with them.* And *S. Paul* says to the *Corinthians*, and in their Person to all the Faithful, *2 Cor. vi. 16.* that they *are the Temple of the living God*, in Opposition to Idols, or any false Deity whatsoever, *because God dwelleth in them.* Now surely, he whose Inhabitation in us consecrates us into Temples of the living God, can be no other than God himself; nay, I think, with Submission to better Judgments, that he is very plainly called so in this last-cited

1 Whist. Prim. Christ. Reviv. Vol. IV. Art. 20. & passim.

place. In others he is said to *be in us*, to *rest upon us*, to *enlighten us*; all which are Expressions peculiarly applied in Scripture to the Divine Presence. But here is a Passage, wherein, without any Possibility of cavilling with any sort of Shame, he is expressly named God, viz. 1 Cor. xii. 6. *There are Diversities of Operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all.* For *vers. 11.* we are told, that *it is that one and the self-same Spirit that worketh all these things, dividing to every Man severally as he will*; though they are elsewhere ascribed to the Father and the Son. And so is he evidently styled *Lord*, 2 Thess. iii. 5. where he is very particularly distinguish'd from the Father and the Son; *May the Lord direct your Hearts*, says the Apostle, *into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ*. It is plain here beyond Contradiction, that the Person to whom he makes this Prayer, is expressly named *Lord*; and is distinct from God the *Father*, into whose Love, and from *Christ*, into the Patient waiting for whom, or into whose Patience, he prays the Lord to direct the Hearts of the *Thessalonians*. The Adversary cannot reasonably reject this Interpretation, because it is more particularly the Office of the Holy Ghost to direct and guide the Hearts of the Faithful; and he owns him to be the great Author of Sanctification to all good Men. Where, by the way, we have another Instance of his being properly invoked, which he will do well to take Notice of. Nor could the Godhead of the Holy Spirit be more fully asserted, than it is by *S. Paul*, 1 Cor. ii. where he tells us, *ver. 10.* that *the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God*. Which, sure, to affirm of any created Being, would be to derogate from the Honour of God. And in the Words immediately following, he supposes him to be as intimate to God, as the Spirit of a Man is to himself, and consequent-

ly essentially one with him: *What Man knoweth the things of a Man*, says he, *save the Spirit of Man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.* Not to insist here upon his being joined in the Form of Baptism with the Father, and the Son; as an Object, which all *Christians* are to confide in and worship, in being baptized into his Name: He is said to teach the Faithful all things; to bring all things to the Remembrance of the Disciples, whatsoever *Jesus Christ* had said unto them; to guide us into all the Truth, to tell things to come, and the like. Certainly these are all plain Characters of his Divinity.

To this let me add here, for a farther Confirmation of this momentous Truth, the Divine Works ascribed to the Holy Ghost in Scripture; such as his Creation of the World; his Conservation of it; and his Mission, and *Unction of Christ*: Reserving his Gift of Tongues, and Miracles, for my fourth Head of Discourse, as falling naturally under it. As to his Creation of the World, we have it declared, as to the most excellent Part of it, *Psalms xxxiii. 6.* and consequently as to rest; *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made; and all the Host of them, by the Breath of his Mouth.* Which is confirmed by *Job, Chap. xxvi. 13.* *By his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens.* As to his Conservation of it, we are told, *Gen. i. 2.* that *the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters*, by a Figure of a Part for the Whole: Or that he sat on the Waters; being a Simile borrowed from a Hen brooding, and cherishing her Chickens. Which is thus farther explained by *Is. xl. 13.* *Regard being had to the preceding and following Words; Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his Counsellor hath taught him?* And as to his Mission and *Unction of Christ*, that is set forth very particularly by the same Prophet, *Ch. lxi. 1, 2, 3.* *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings.*

Tidings unto the Meek, he hath sent me to bind up the Broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound: To proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord, and the Day of Vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn: To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness, that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Lastly, to shut up this Head with what seems to me no less capital, than any thing which I have hitherto delivered concerning it; the Scripture represents to us the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost of such a Nature, as never to be forgiven. This, one would think, sufficiently declares the Dignity of that Person, Blasphemy against whom is of so indelible a Guilt. But because the 'Author I have in hand is so impious as to ridicule it, and to impute the Reservedness of some *Orthodox* Fathers, in speaking their Mind freely concerning the Co-essentiality and Co-equality of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, to Ignorance and Superstition; ² and concerning his Divinity, to Want of ancient Authority; I must here open that Matter farther. And to that end I will explain, first wherein I humbly conceive the Nature of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, as it is commonly called, to consist; and then assign a more probable Cause of those Fathers Reservedness upon those Points.

It is said then, *Matth. xii. 31.* that *all manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men: But the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto Men.* What! is the Holy Ghost greater than the Father, or the Son? This Passage, with those parallel to

¹ Whist. Prim. Christ. Reviv. Vol. IV. Art. 20. p. 373.

² Idem 369.

it, such as *Mark iii. 28, 29. Verily I say unto you, all Sins shall be forgiven unto the Sons of Men, and Blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never Forgiveness, but is in Danger of eternal Damnation.* Luke xii. 10. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. and x. 26, 29. 1 John v. 16. has perplexed the Mind of many Learned Men. And therefore I shall offer at the following summary Explication of this Sin, but with great Deference to the Judgment of my Superiors and Betters. The Father then, as the first in the Divine OEconomy, from the Beginning of the World to the Coming of *Jesus Christ*, revealed his Holiness and Righteousness to Mankind by the Law of Nature, and to the *Jews* by the Laws he gave them, especially that of *Moses*. The Son afterwards, as the Second, in the Fulness of Time completes the former Revelation; and moreover lays down the only Means whereby could be expiated the Sins which were committed against either of those Laws, viz. his Death. And then comes the Holy Ghost, as the Third, to open the Eyes of Men, and to convince them of the Heinousness of their Offence incurr'd against the Father, and of the Efficacy of the Remedy offered them by the Son; to the end they may accept it, and apply it to themselves, in order to their Salvation. These three Dispensations follow one another in this manner, and are thus link'd together. Now to bring this to the Point in hand, I say, with Submission, that whoever offends against the Father, as Legislator, may be relieved by the Son, as Redeemer: And that whoever sinneth against the Son, by rejecting the Gospel through Prejudice, Error, or Contempt, may have his Understanding enlighten'd, and his Will and Affections rectified by the Holy Ghost, to see and embrace its Truth and Beauty; and so come to repent and believe. But that whoever, after he has been thus wrought upon, wilfully shuts his Eyes again against the Gospel, and maliciously casts it off, thus *doing Despite unto the Spirit of Grace,*

Grace, who had so far sanctified him ; that such an one can expect no Repentance of his Sin, nor have any Hope of Mercy. The plain Reason whereof is, that his Iniquity being come to the full, by his throwing off all the Means of Grace, it is become irremissible, because he has rejected together both the Law of the Father, the Mercy of the Son, and the Operation of the Holy Ghost. And having thus offended against the whole Trinity, what Person is there in the Deity from which he can look for any Help? This I take to be the Nature of the Sin against the Holy Ghost. And tho' the Scripture makes it but of one Species ; I think I may say, that it admits of Degrees, within which there is a Possibility of Repentance, and consequently of Forgiveness, 'till it rise to the highest ; whereby many Difficulties will be solved, which attend the Explication of the above-cited parallel Passages.

As to the Reservedness of some *Orthodox* Fathers upon the Points of the Holy Spirit's Divinity, and consequently his Co-essentiality and Co-equality with the Father and the Son ; I might dispense with myself from taking any Notice of it, having confined myself in these *Discourses* to what is delivered in Scripture : But because the fore-mentioned Author and my other Adversary seem to lay some Stress upon it, and, as I think, assign a wrong Cause of it, I must do here those Reverend Persons Justice. The ² former then tells us, that *S. Basil*, who ventur'd as far he durst, was yet afraid of directly calling the Holy Ghost God, for fear of Expulsion from his Bishoprick ; for which he quotes *Gregory Nazianzen*, in his Funeral Oration, pag. 364. Nay, that himself expressly owns that he is not God, but the Spirit of God. With what Truth he has affirmed this, the following Passage will shew : Ἀκρωμένῳ δὲ τῷ ἀπαγέρ

¹ Vide *Discourse* XII. on Heb. x. 28, 29.

² Whist. Prim. Christ. Rev. Vol. IV. Art. 20. p. 369.

ἵνα εἰς ταῦτα ἐργασθῇ τί φησιν ; Ὅτι ναὸς τῷ ἐν ὑμῖν ἅγιος Πνεύματος ἔστι. Πᾶς ὃ ναὸς, Θεὸς ναὸς· εἰ ὃ ἐσμέν ναὸς τῷ ἅγιος Πνεύματι, Θεὸς τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα. *Basil. Apol. ad Cæsarienses, Epist. 141. and one or two places more there. Let us hear him who was caught into the Third Heaven. What says he? Because you are the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you. Now every Temple is God's Temple. If then we are the Temple of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost is God. And Gregory Nazianzen, in his Oration, says of him what implies as much; Ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ ἐαυτὸν τὸ φεικνέσθαι, ὡς τῷ Πνεύματι ἐκπεσεῖν, εἰ μὴ σέβον τὸ Πνεῦμα ὡς Πατρὸς καὶ ὡς ὁμοούσιον καὶ ὁμότιμον. And he (Basil) wish'd to himself the horridst thing, viz. to fall from that Spirit, if he did not worship him as Co-essential, and of the same Honour with the Father and the Son.*

But *Basil's Treatise of the Holy Ghost* sufficiently declares his Faith: And if he was cautious when *Arianism* prevailed, lest he should be deprived of the Means of instructing his Flock, that may be an Instance of Human Weakness in his Conduct; but is no Argument that he doubted of the Holy Spirit's Divinity, tho' he chose rather to maintain the Doctrine, than to express the Word *God*, lest he should offend the *Arians*, who at that Time had the Power in their Hands. The ¹ same Author, and ² the other, tell us likewise, that *S. Hilary*, in the Twelve Books he wrote concerning the *Trinity*, never calls the Holy Ghost expressly *God*. Whether it be so or no, I have not Leisure narrowly to examine; nor do I think it so material: I presume the Answer I but just now gave in the Case of *S. Basil*, may serve here. To which I will add, that *Hilary's* Caution was not without Ground, since it is well known that both

¹ Whist. *ibid.* p. 370. ex Petavio.

² Clend. *Traët. de Pers.* p. ex Erasmo.

he and the other were much persecuted by the *Arians*, and banish'd at their Instigation. As to the Testimonies produced in general by 'one of those Authors, that the greatest Part of the *Catholicks* durst not plainly profess that the Holy Spirit was God; nay, that the General Council of *Constantinople* did not directly call him God; and that 'tis certain that the *Catholicks* durst not plainly own the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, so late as the Days of *Basil*, nor indeed somewhat later; and that the very first Synod, which expressly decreed that the Holy Spirit should be esteemed God, was that of *Alexandria*, where *Athanasius* presided: It may be reply'd in short, that if the *Catholicks* durst not do this, it was not doubtless for want of ancient Authority, as it is pretended; for they had the Scriptures by them, than which no ancients or better Authority could be desired in this Case. And if the Councils preceding the *Alexandrian* did not proceed upon these Matters, it might be for want of Occasion of explaining farther the Doctrine of the Church, the *Hereticks* being not then grown so bold, or so considerable for Number or Interest, as to oblige them to exercise their Authority. But a time came, we see, when they did it; and the like may happen when ours shall do so against Revivers of old Heresies, or Maintainers of new. Upon the whole, I leave it to the Reader to judge, whether the Fourth Century had not good Authority to believe the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; and that if they were persuaded or affrighted into the Doctrine of the Co-essentiality and Co-equality of that blessed Spirit to the Father and the Son, from the Dread of the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, if they should not embrace it; as this often-mentioned Au-

† Whist. Prim. Christ. Rev. Vol. IV. Art. 20. p. 370. ex Petav. & Huetio.

thor tells us ; they had not just Ground so to be ? Particularly considering the Learning and Piety of S. Basil and S. Hilary, and their eminent Performances upon this Subject ; whether it was Ignorance and Superstition in them, and not rather an Effect of the due Sense they had of the Sublimity of the blessed Spirit's Nature, and of the Excellency of his Operations ?

And so I pass to the second thing I proposed to prove, viz. that the Holy Ghost is a Person distinct from the Father and the Son ; *I will pray the Father, says Jesus Christ, and he shall give you another Comforter.* I say, a distinct Person, but united in one and the same Essence, which is and can be but one ; and communicating in the same undivided Substance, which is, and can be but one ; and is therefore the Center of Unity amongst the Three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, who equally partake of the same common Divine Nature : For as we must be careful to maintain this necessary Distinction of the Persons Inviolable, it being a fundamental Point of Religion ; so ought we to be alike solicitous of preserving the Doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead ; *neither confounding the Persons, as we are taught by the Catholick Church, nor dividing the Substance.* And therefore I declare here by the way, that our modern *Arians* asserting, that God the Father, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit, are Beings numerically distinct from each other ; I do not see how they can be acquitted from downright *Heathenish Polytheism*.

But not to deviate from the Text, and to keep to what is necessary ; I shall not spend my Time now, nor abuse the Reader's Patience, in proving, that the Holy Ghost, to whom so many Personal Actions

² Idem, Art. 22. p. 377.

are ascribed in Scripture, is truly and properly a Person, and not a Quality, Energy or Emanation only, as some vainly pretend; thereby destroying the very Existence of the Author of our Faith and Sanctification. This only I will observe, whereby that Difficulty may be easily cleared; that in the Style of the inspired Writers, the Holy Spirit is sometimes put for the Person himself, who is the Author of all Spiritual Gifts and Graces; as where he is said to *teach* the Faithful, to *guide* them into *all the Truth*, to *search* all things; to *divide* his *Gifts* and *Graces* to *every Man severally as he will*; all which are Personal Actions, and denote the Holy Ghost to be a Person. At other times he must be taken in the Scripture for the Gifts and Graces themselves; whence he is said to be *given according to Measure*; to be *poured forth* upon Believers; to be *taken from* those who do not make a right Use of the Means he affords them to be saved; and even to be *quench'd* in them that resist his gracious Influences.

Now using the Term in the former Sense, I affirm against the *Socinians*, that there is a Modal Distinction betwixt the Holy Ghost and the Father; and likewise betwixt the same blessed Spirit and the Son. This is evident from the very Words of my Text; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter*; wherein there is a manifest Distinction between the Three Persons of the glorious Trinity; and their peculiar Offices, with respect to the Gospel OEconomy, are attributed to each of them. For there the Son is said, as Mediator and Intercessor, to *pray the Father*; which he might do by virtue of his Mediatorial Office, whereby he was qualified, in Consequence of his Obedience, and Sacrifice of

! Clend. Tract. de Pers. p. 170, 171.

himself upon the Cross for Mankind, effectually to intercede for the Faithful. But he that prays and intercedes for them, must be distinguish'd from the Father, to whom the Prayer and Intercession is made; and between whom, and them, as Mediator, he interposes himself for their Reconciliation and Deliverance. Now the Holy Ghost is as plainly distinguish'd from the Father, as I now observ'd the Son is; for he is said to give him; *And he shall give you another Comforter*: And surely there must be a Distinction, i. e. Modal, betwixt the Person who gives, and him who is given. Nor is the Holy Spirit less evidently distinguish'd from the Son; for he is said to be not the Same, but Another Comforter. Besides that their Offices were distinct, and to be exercised at different Seasons; as we shall see by and by. This may be farther evinced from *ver. 26.* of this Chapter; *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* And likewise from *ver. 7.* of Chapter xvi. *But if I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you*; not to quote other Passages of Scripture to the same purpose: From which Words, as well as from those of my Text, is plainly deducible the Distinction of the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, whilst the Holy Spirit is distinguish'd both from the Father, who is said to send him in the Son's Name, and from the Son, who says absolutely that he will send him unto his Disciples. And here, by the way, we have also a Proof of the Father and Son's essential Unity; for tho' in my Text, the Son says that the Father at his Prayer gives the Holy Spirit; yet in this last place, he affirms of himself that he will send him.

When the Holy Ghost then is said here to be given by the Father, it is not exclusively of the Son; for we see that he is sent by both; and this Sending or Mission; or Temporary Procession, if I may call

it so, is the Ground of his Subordination in the Gospel-OEconomy; insomuch that he is not the First, which is proper to the Father; nor the Second, which is peculiar to the Son; but the Third Person in the Trinity. So likewise when he is said, as *Chap. following, ver. 26. to proceed from the Father*, as he does by an eternal Spiration; it is not a Denial that he proceeds in the same manner from the Son: But on the contrary, his Mission being founded upon his Procession, it implies that as he was sent by the Father and the Son, so he did alike proceed from both; being elsewhere called the Spirit of the Son. This Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, is a Truth which has been acknowledged all along, by all *Orthodox* Christians: For tho' his eternal Procession from the Son has been disputed by the Eastern Church, and has been made the Occasion of one of the widest Breaches which ever happen'd between it and the Western; yet if we strictly examine the Merits of this Controversy, we shall find that it is little else than a Wrangling about Expressions. Both Sides acknowledge the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and his Personal Distinction from the Father and the Son; and differ only as to the Manner of his Procession. The one Side maintains, *i. e.* the Western, that he proceeds from the Father and the Son; and the other, *i. e.* the Eastern, from the Father by the Son; both confessing at the same time that he is the Spirit of the Father and the Son; and that with the Father and the Son together, he ought to be worship'd. Wherefore, tho' we adhere to the Western Church in this Point, and that with good Reason, owning the eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, as most conformable to Scripture; yet we dare not impute Heresy to the Eastern. I have dwelt the longer upon this Distinction of the Persons in the Trinity, because without it, it is impossible to assign to each his proper

proper Office in the great Work of Man's Salvation and Administration of the Affairs of God's Church in the several Periods of the World.

I proceed now to the third Thing I proposed, *viz.* to consider the Holy Ghost in his Office, as he is a second Comforter after *Jesus Christ*, Another Comforter. The Word in the Original, wherein the Scriptures were penn'd, as dictated by the Spirit of Truth, is *Paraclete*. It is of a much more extensive Signification than that, and therefore not to be restrained to any particular Sense, denoting in general a Comforter, an Advocate, an Exhorter, an Intercessor. All which Acceptations are proper to the Holy Ghost, and the Office he exercises in the Christian Church. For this Reason, in the ancientest and best Versions, even in the *Syriack*, tho' our Saviour, and the *Jews* of his Time, used that Tongue; the *Greek* Word, Παράκλησις, is retained: The Interpreters choosing rather to adopt a Term into their Language, than to express the Office of the Holy Spirit by one of their own, which did not fully imply what was designed. And for the same Reason it would not have been amiss, if our Translators had done so too; and instead of *Comforter*, had put in *Paraclete*; which is as proper in this Case, as the Word *Messiah*, which is of *Hebrew*, or *Christ*, which is of *Greek* Extraction, can be, to express the Office of *Jesus Christ*, the Anointed of God the Father. Notwithstanding they have render'd it here, and three other parallel Places, *Comforter*: And yet 1 John ii. 1. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*; the same Word in the Original, though applied to *Jesus Christ*, we have it translated *Advocate*: Whereas it ought to be alike, one would think, in the Gospel and Epistle. But our Translators did thus, very probably, by a particular Regard to the Occasion, and Matter in hand. However, it is the general Opinion of the Learned, that if the Term is any wise to be render'd,

it must be by that of *Advocate*, as best answering to the Office wherein the Holy Ghost was to resemble our blessed Lord.

But my Business at present being not so much to explain, how the Holy Ghost is a *Paraclete* in general, which I shall have a direct Occasion to do in the following *Discourse*; as to shew wherein he is another than *Jesus Christ*, or a Second after him: I must here keep to that. As to the chief Signification of the Word then, which is that of an *Advocate*, or *Intercessor*; it is not improperly applied to him: Having succeeded our Blessed Saviour in that Office on Earth, which he now exercises in Heaven. For whilst the one continually intercedes for the Faithful before the Throne of God, by representing his own Merit; the other does the same in their Hearts, by helping their Infirmities; suggesting to them pious Thoughts, kindling in them devout Affections; in a word, teaching them how to pray: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our Infirmities*, says *S. Paul*, Rom. viii. 26. *for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered.* Which is no way inconsistent with *Jesus Christ's* Office of Mediator, as we hereby see; the Holy Ghost farther having not entered upon his Administration of the *Christian Church*, till the first Advocate was gone away hence; being not poured forth upon the Disciples, till the other had ascended up on high. Neither is this the only Sense, wherein the Holy Spirit may be justly styled the Advocate of *Christians* here in Earth, as our Lord is above in Heaven: He was doubtless so, when after the other's Departure he powerfully pleaded the Cause of *Christianity* before Humane Judicatories, the primary Notion of such a Person; prompting the Apostles, primitive Martyrs, and

z Vide *Discourse XI. on John xvi. 7.*

Confessors of *Christ's* Religion, to what they should say, when brought before Kings and Rulers for the Gospel's-sake; and enabling them undauntedly in the Face of the World to triumph over all Opposition; and even in Death to be more than Conquerors, whilst they stood to the Truth of their Profession, and sealed it with their Blood. And he continues to be so still, as he pleads *Christ's* own Cause against a multitude of Unbelievers; against *Jews, Mahometans, and Heathens*, and even *Heretics*; and effectually reprove or convinces them.

As to the Signification of *Exhorter, Teacher, or Preacher*, which the Term implies; the Holy Ghost is likewise a Second, or another *Paraclete* than *Jesus Christ*. For as after him he reminded the Apostles of what they had heard, supplied what was wanting in their Knowledge, and excited them to the Work of their Ministry, so he perpetually, after his peculiar way, preaches to all the Faithful, teaches them the Will of God, and exhorts them to their Duty. It is he who gently leads them into what is Truth, and Right; enlightning their Understandings, by setting before them the Heavenly Objects in their full Evidence, and freeing them from Darkness, Error, and Prejudice; rectifying their Will, so as that they choose in all things to follow the Divine Laws, which are revealed to them in Scripture, and given to them by his Inspiration, as the Rule of their Life and Actions; and subduing their Affections, by bringing them under his Guidance; weaning them from the things of this World, and fixing them upon Heaven, and the eternal Bliss above. But all this he performs inwardly by his Influences, Motions, and Operations; whereas *Jesus Christ* does it outwardly by his Word.

Lastly, as to the Signification of *Comforter*, by which our Translators have rendred the Word; the Holy Ghost is also another *Paraclete*, or a Second after *Jesus Christ*; and that with the Distinction of the

the one's executing that Office outwardly, and the other inwardly. And indeed, it is he who truly comforts the Faithful in all their Tribulations and Afflictions. It is he who cures the Diseases and Anguishes of their Souls, and administers to them, in all their Dangers and Distresses, the only true and solid Comforts, even those of Religion, and his Graces; *in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.* He gives them often in this Vale of Tears, in the holy Institutions of *Christ's* Religion, a Fore-taste of those Heavenly Pleasures, as an Earnest of the future, uninterrupted, and full Enjoyment of that Happiness, which *Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, and it never enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive!* A Joy too big for the Human Soul here to comprehend, or for the largest Thoughts even to imagine! But to this, worldly and carnal Men, being wholly taken up with the Cares of this Life, or immers'd in sensual Fruitions, are perfect Strangers, having had no Experience, and being incapable of such Delights. The Truth is, it is impossible they should, whilst the Earth and the Flesh engross all their Thoughts, and employ all the Faculties of their Souls: How can the natural, or animal Man relish things, which are but spiritually discerned? They have no Notion of them: And some wonder what others mean by talking of Spiritual Joys, of the Pleasures and Satisfactions of a Religious Life, which they look upon as a severe and irksome Task, incompatible with Flesh and Blood. It is a Contradiction to them, to speak of Comfort in Mortification, Self-denial, Bearing the Cross, Renouncing the World, and the like. And therefore our Lord tells his Disciples here, that the *World receives not the Comforter, because it sees him not, neither knoweth him. But they know him, as he subjoins; for he dwelleth with them, and shall be in them.*

Which brings me to the fourth thing I proposed, *viz.* to consider the Holy Ghost, with regard
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to the Perpetuity of his Ministration on Earth; *that he may abide with you for ever.* Which will appear from what he did as to the Apostles and Primitive *Christians*, by bestowing upon them his extraordinary Gifts of Tongues and Miracles; and what he will continue to do to the World's End, as to all the Faithful, by granting them his ordinary ones of Divine Graces. Our Blessed Lord then having ascended into Heaven, did, according to his Promise that they should be endow'd with Power from on high, send down upon his Apostles the Holy Spirit: Which was performed upon the Feast of *Pentecost*, viz. fifty Days after our Saviour's Resurrection, and ten after his Ascension; when the Holy Ghost came upon them in the most gracious and powerful Effects; and this to convert the World to the Faith of *Christ*, to establish a Church, to govern it by Commission under its Head; and farther, to institute an Authority in it for its regular Administration, to the Consummation of all things; with a Promise, that they should have the Divine Assistance for the Sanctification and Edification of it. To this end he provided them first of all with the Gift of divers Languages; it being absolutely necessary for them, who were to convert the World, that they should speak to every Nation in their own Tongue. For admitting they could, by the most indefatigable Industry, and with all Human Help, have attained to a sufficient Skill in those Languages, it must be but in a Course of many Years Study; which would have been a great Delay and Hindrance to the Work they were intended for. And therefore, besides what was done in this instantaneous manner, he inspired others likewise with the Interpretation of Tongues, as mightily tending to the speedy and particular Promulgation of the Gospel. For as the *Christian* Congregations in those Days, especially in *Judea*, and throughout the *Roman* Empire, consisted of People of several Nations and Languages; it
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was in a manner impossible that they should all understand what the Apostle or Preacher instructed them in. But it was the Business of those Interpreters of Tongues, to explain to those distinct People, in their own Language, what had been preached to them: Otherwise they could not have been edified, even by the Mouth of an Apostle; because though he might be skilful in all Languages, yet he could not speak to those mixt Assemblies in more than one Tongue at the same time. But the chief Advantage of the twelve Apostles stood in this, that the Holy Ghost exempted them at the same time from all Ignorance and Error, by his infallible Inspirations. He dispell'd in an instant all their Prejudices and Mistakes; he opened their Minds, that they might comprehend the holy Oracles; he made them clearly see those things, which had till then been hidden from them, being involved in Types and Figures; he taught them fully to understand all the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and gave them a thorough Knowledge of the Truth and Mysteries of the New; securing them from lapsing, by his unerring Directions. To this Faculty of speaking divers kinds of Tongues, he was pleased to add the Prophe-tick Spirit, whereby they were enabled to foretell things to come: To the end the Faithful, being apprized of the Fate of the Church before-hand, might be the better prepared to undergo her various Conditions: As also the Skill of Discerning of Spirits, which qualified them to judge of Mens Pretensions, and to tell from what Principle they acted. Of all which, Instances are to be met with in the New Testament.

But Miracles being no less necessary to engage Mens Attention, as an Appeal to Sense; nor less useful to convince their Minds, as a Demonstration of a Divine Power: The Holy Ghost in the second place bestowed that Gift likewise upon the Apostles, and some eminent Persons in the first Ages of *Christianity*,

to confirm their Mission, and the Religion they publish'd. They cast out Devils, and healed the Sick; they restored the Lame to their Feet, and the Paralytick to the Use of their Limbs; they cured all manner of Diseases, and even raised the Dead; and all this by a Word, or Touch of theirs. From the Body of *S. Paul* were brought unto the Sick, or waved over them, *Handkerchiefs* or *Aprons*, &c. *Acts* xix. 12. So great was their Power, that the Shadow of *S. Peter* passing by, was thought sufficient to work miraculous Cures! *Acts* v. 15. And who could doubt, whether this Man acted by a Divine Commission, who with a Word of his Mouth was able to inflict the Sentence of Death upon those two, who were the first guilty of Sacrilege in the *Christian* Church; and that by withholding Part of what had been solemnly devoted to God, tho' it was their own before? A Description of a Sin, and such a Punishment thereupon, as one would have thought should have been sufficient to discourage in all future Times such Sacrilegious Attempts! But the Raising of the Dead to Life is such a Miracle, as, if any thing can effect it, is surely sufficient to convince the most obstinate *Jew*, and to convert the most harden'd Infidel; carrying its own Conviction along with it. For none can reasonably question, whether he speaks and acts by a Divine Authority, whom he sees so plainly assisted with God's Omnipotency, in working things above the Reach of any created Being.

Nor did those extraordinary Gifts die with the Apostles, and their Contemporaries that were endow'd with them, but continued in the Church amongst some eminent Persons for more than a hundred Years after, in the same manner as in the Apostolical Times. *Justin Martyr*, who flourish'd in the middle of the Second Century, speaks of some of

: *Just. Mart. Apol. 2.*

these Gifts as frequent in his Time; ¹ and appeals to them for the Truth of the *Christian* Religion. And *S. Irenæus*, towards the End of that Century, ² assures us, that there were then Visions and Revelations, Discerning of Spirits, Prophetick Gifts, and Miracles; so that the Sick were healed, and even the Dead raised to Life.

Those Gifts indeed were afterwards gradually impaired; but yet they remained in the Church, especially that of Miracles, for at least four hundred Years after *Christ*. But there being no longer need of such miraculous Powers, than that *Christianity* was in a Sense propagated throughout the World, after it had baffled all the Arts, and subdued the Force of its most subtle and potent Adversaries; and had reduced Kings and Emperors to the Obedience of the Gospel: So that the just Authority of the Church was every where acknowledg'd, and the Clergy considered as the Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, to whom was committed the Word of Reconciliation; as faithful Historians acquaint us it then fell out. And then that Scripture-Canon of the New Testament, which was left to be a standing and unalterable Rule of Faith, and Practice to *Christians* in all Ages, was not only sealed up, but look'd upon as sacred: When immediate Inspiration and Miracles were no longer necessary or useful, then those Powers ceased.

But though the Holy Ghost does not now manifest himself by those extraordinary Effects, which were peculiar to the first Ages of *Christianity*, yet he has not withdrawn his ordinary Gifts from the Church, or the particular Members of it: For as to the Church, the same Spirit that inspired and assisted the Apostles in their Preaching the Gospel, gave them also Power to ordain others in their stead, to carry on that Work, and to minister to the

¹ Dial. cum Tryph. p. 254, 256, 269.

² Iren. Lib. xi. Cap. 56.

Necessities and Occasions of the Faithful in a constant Succession of Men till the End of the World ; to lead and feed the several Flocks committed to their Care ; to intercede and pray for them ; to offer up their Petitions and Thanks ; to instruct them in the Truths he had revealed ; to explain to them the Holy Scriptures ; to administer to them the Sacraments instituted by our Saviour. In a word, to perform whatsoever is requisite and convenient for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the Edifying of the Body of *Christ*. And as to particular Members, the Holy Ghost does still, and will continue with them for ever by his ordinary Gifts. It is he who openeth their Hearts, that they may understand the Word of God ; who also confirms it to them, and preserves them in it : Who sanctifies the Water of Baptism, to the Washing away of their Original Guilt ; and who descends upon the Elements in the Lord's Supper, that they may be to them the Sacrament of his Body and Blood ; conveying to them Spiritual Graces, and giving them an Earnest of everlasting Glory. Who also renews their corrupted Nature, heals all the Diseases of their Souls, and administers to them all necessary Comforts. Who directs them in their Thoughts, Words and Actions, that they may do those things that are well-pleasing to God ; and assist them in their Devotions and pious Exercises, that they may perform a Service acceptable to him through his Son. In short, who unites them to *Jesus Christ*, their Head, and gives them Assurance of their Adoption and eternal Inheritance.

Upon the whole Matter, let us entertain worthy Apprehensions of the Spirit of Truth and Holiness, the Third Person in the glorious Trinity ; and let us beware of all Approaches to the Tremendous Blasphemy against him, by conceiving any thing of him below the Sublimity of his Essence, the Honour of his Personality, and the Dignity of his Office. Not

as if one Divine Person, apart from the others, could be blasphemed or glorified ; but to say it by the way, on the Account of his Operations. Let us return our most humble Thanks to God the Father, for sending to his Church, at the effectual Prayer of God the Son, the Person of God the Holy Ghost, to abide with it for ever : Especially for the Extraordinary Gifts of the same Spirit conferr'd on the Apostles in particular, and his Ordinary ones he bestows on the Faithful in general. And let us, lastly, obediently submit to the Ministry, which by his Appointment is establish'd amongst us ; and to the Word which is delivered to us, as from him. It is true, it is not reach'd out to us now by Men like the Holy Apostles. The ordinary Pastors are but Children in comparison, who fall very short of the shining Talents which were committed to them. But yet they may preach the same Doctrine : They do not speak with the same Power ; but it is the same Voice, the Voice of God, that utters itself by their Mouth. They are less valuable Vessels, Earthen Vessels ; but they contain the same Liquor : And tho' they do not pour it out in such Abundance, and with such Brightness, as did those chosen Vessels, the Apostles ; yet God never so fails to magnify his Power in their Weakness, that his Church wants any necessary Instruction. Though he has withdrawn the extraordinary and miraculous Gifts wherewith he endow'd those his first Heralds in the Beginning of Christianity ; yet has he not the saving and edifying ones which are requisite for the Sanctification of the Faithful. If he does not make our bodily Ears hear that sudden and wonderful Sound which they heard, yet he is not wanting in causing his Voice to resound in our Souls by the preaching of the Gospel. If he no longer sends Tongues out of Heaven, yet he unties those of his Servants, and teaches them the Language of *Canaan* ; to speak to his *Jerusalem* according to its Heart;

Heart, to instruct the Ignorant, to comfort the Afflicted, to strengthen the Weak, and to heal the Broken-hearted. Though the Tongues of the Preachers are not like as of Fire, as those that sat upon the Apostles; yet they may be attended with the Heavenly Fire of the Spirit of Truth and Holiness, to enlighten the Understandings of their Hearers with the Knowledge of the Gospel; to inflame their Wills with God's Love, and with Zeal for his Glory, and to purify their Affections from all Filthiness and evil Habits. If any one complains that the Voice of the Teachers does not produce these Effects in him, let him charge the Hardness and Incredulity of his Heart with it, which refuseth to embrace the Divine Word with the Obedience of Faith. As for us, whenever it is directed to us, submit we all the Thoughts of our Minds, all the Affections of our Wills, and all the Works of our Hands to it, and the Guidance of the blessed Spirit. And then we shall feel, by a sweet Experience, that it is the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant!



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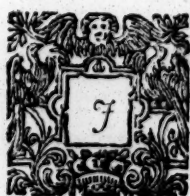


DISCOURSE XI.

The Holy Ghost the Paraclete.

JOHN xvi. 7.

Nevertheless, I tell you the Truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.



*J*esus Christ, considering in himself that the Time of his Departure drew nigh, was graciously pleased to think before-hand of giving his Disciples his wholesome Instructions, to strengthen them against the Temptations and Disgraces which were to befall them at that Juncture, and afterwards. He had insinuated to them, amongst other things, that he was to leave them, and that thereupon they would be exposed to the Hatred of the World, as he had been; and that since they persecuted him, they would also persecute them. But in the Beginning of

of this Chapter, he tells them plainly, that they would put them out of the Synagogues; yea, that the Hour cometh, that they would be insulted with that brutish Stupidity, that whosoever killed them, would think that he did God Service, or that he offered a Service to God. And notwithstanding this, which could not but afflict them, he subjoins immediately in expresse Terms, *Now I go my way to him that sent me.* The acquainting them at first, when he spake but covertly of parting from them, that they should be hated and persecuted for his Name's sake, raised in them sad Apprehensions, and put them into a deep Melancholy. But yet his Divine Presence was a mighty Comfort to them under their ill-boding Fears, and a sovereign Remedy against the worst that could befall them. They will put us out of the Synagogues, they might say in themselves; but thou art thyself our Rabbi and Master, who teaches us the Words of eternal Life. They will kill us; but thou art our Life, who nourishes us with the living Bread which came down from Heaven, and gives us Water to drink, springing up into everlasting Life. But when he added, that he was going to leave them, to return to him that sent him, it threw them into such a Consternation, that they had not so much Presence of Mind, as to ask him whither he intended to go. These things filled their Heart with Sorrow in such a measure, that our Blessed Saviour took particular Notice of it, and thought fit to upbraid them with their Weakness and Neglect of him: *I go my way*, says he to them, *to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you*, goes he on, *Sorrow hath filled your Heart.* And indeed they were more astonish'd, as they had Reason, humanly speaking, than *Elisha* was, when he saw his Master *Elijah* carried up by a Whirlwind into Heaven, and cried out after him, *My Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof!* For

what could they do, if he went once from them? Should they go back to their own Houses? but they had abandon'd them. Should they betake themselves again to their Fishing-Boats, to get their Livelihood thereby, as they had done before? but they were already in a manner cast out of the Synagogues and excommunicated; and it was not lawful to buy any thing of such Men. Their Condition, doubtless, was like to be deplorable enough, as they apprehended Matters. And therefore our gracious Lord, to set them right in that Perplexity, and to comfort them against the Distresses he had foretold they must expect upon his departing, says to them in the Words of the Text, *Nevertheless, I tell you the Truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

Macedonius, and his Followers of old, pretending that the Holy Ghost was no where styled *God* in Scripture, would by no means allow him to be a Divine Person; and having learnt from the *Arians*, in the Matter of the Consubstantiality of the Son, to reject all Consequences, tho' never so evident; they inclined with them to believe him to be but a Minister of God, and a meer Creature. But finding him to be expressly called *the Spirit of God*, Matth. iii. 16. *the Power of the Highest*, Luke i. 35. *the Finger of God*, Chap. xi. 20. of the same Book, tho' in all those places he is as plainly declared to be God; they at last fix'd in this Opinion, that he was an Energy, Vertue, or Power. One would have thought that our Moderns, who delight so much in reviving old *Heresies*, would have been contented with what their Fore-fathers had left them of this kind; but that will not serve their Turn, they are Men of brighter Parts, and must refine; the Testimony of the Holy Ghost is the Principle of Faith, and 'they

will have none in *Christianity*; and ¹ the Beginning, Progress, and Perfection of the Spiritual Life, must be owing to natural Strength, not the Influence of the Spirit of God. Having therefore proved the Divinity of the Holy Ghost against the *Unitarians* of all sorts, in a former ² *Discourse*, to which I refer the Reader; I shall endeavour to explain here some of his Operations, as they are contained in the Text.

Wherein we have two things offered to our Consideration, *viz.* 1. In general, the Truth of this Proposition of *Jesus Christ* to his Disciples, *That it was expedient for them that he should go away*; intimating thereby the Necessity of his leaving them corporally for their Good. And, 2. in particular, the Reasons he gives of his Departure from them, whereof one is, *that if he does not go away, the Comforter will not come unto them*; and the other, *that if he departs, he will send him unto them*.

But here is a Preface, *Nevertheless, I tell you the Truth*, which deserves our Attention: *Jesus Christ* protests to his Disciples in the very Entrance, that there is nothing more true than what he was going to say to them. It was not uncommon indeed with him to use this Form of Speech, or that other which comes to the same thing, *Verily, verily I say unto you*: But had he ever spoken falsely, or told them things which might be suspected of Untruth; or in respect of which, he stood in need to assure them, that what he said was true? he of whom it was prophesied by *Isaiah*, liii. 9. *that no Deceit was in his Mouth*? It would seem then, as if such Asseverations, or double Affirmations, which come nigh the Nature of Oaths, were no way necessary in our Lord's Discourse. His bare Saying is worth all the

¹ *The Modern Pelagians.*

² *Discourse IV. on Matt. xxviii. 19. and the last before this.*

Oaths of Men ! The Truth of his Word is firmer than the Foundations of the World ! But our Blessed Saviour was pleased to accommodate himself herein to the Weakness of his Auditors, the better to persuade them of the Certainty of what he intended to acquaint them with. This Asseveration, or express and strong Affirmation, was especially necessary upon this Occasion. *Jesus Christ's* Design was to convince his Disciples, that it was more for their Advantage that he should go away, than that he should remain with them ; and what likelihood was there that they would believe it ? He was alone their Hope, their Comfort, their Joy ; they had no mind to go to any but to him ; their Souls were more straitly knit with his, than ever was the Soul of *Jonathan* with *David's*. And therefore he tells them, in a solemn manner, that they might not doubt the Truth of it, that it was expedient for them that he should go away. He might have represented to them, that he was concerned in Point of Glory to leave the Earth, to quit a Place where he lived in Poverty and Misery, and was exposed to the Persecutions and Insults of his Enemies, to be received into Heaven at the Right Hand of his Father, and enjoy an infinite and eternal Felicity. But such is the Goodness of this gracious Redeemer, that he seems to have minded then the Happiness of his Followers more than his own ; or, at least, to have had a particular Regard to it. It is the Character of the Wicked, to seek only their own Account and Profit in all things ; they will do nothing but for themselves. *Ye know nothing at all*, said *Caiaphas* to the *Jews*, *Luke xi. 49, 50. nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one Man should die for the People* : No matter whether he be Innocent, it is expedient for us that he die. But our blessed Saviour, on the contrary, considers especially the Benefit of his Children. Even in his very Ascension, he does
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not look so much to what is glorious for himself, as to the Advantages it shall bring his Disciples; *It is expedient for you*, says he to them, *that I go away*.

And so I proceed to the Consideration of my first Head of Discourse, *viz.* to shew in general, the Expediency of *Jesus Christ's* going away from his Disciples, and the Necessity of it, especially in respect of them. Where I must first explain, what is meant by his *going away*, that the Truth of that Proposition may the better appear, and we may have the more distinct Notion of it. By that then some understand his Death, which was near at hand, when he spoke these Words; and probably his Disciples did so, since Men are apt to fear the worst, and they seemed to be so much concerned at it. According to which Explication, the Sense will be, as if *Jesus Christ* had said to them, "If I do not suffer Death, the Holy Ghost will not come to you; your Sins will not be forgiven you; my Righteousness will not be imputed to you; you will not escape the dreadful Judgment of God; and consequently must perish." And indeed all these things, or the avoiding of all these Miseries, and obtaining the contrary Mercies, are Fruits of the Death of our Saviour. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost could not be bestowed upon Men, unless they were first acquired by the Shedding of his Blood; no other Price could procure them the Remission of their Sins, or so atone for them that they might be reputed just before the Tribunal of the Divine Justice, and so be secured from the Judgment and Execution which shall be awarded at the last Day against all that have remained in their Iniquity. But tho' I will not exclude this Sense, which is so true; yet if we consider well the Scope of the Passage, and compare it with some others which relate to the same Subject, we shall soon perceive that our Lord, by his *going away* here, plainly means his Ascension into Heaven. It was from Heaven that he sent his

Holy Spirit to bear authentick Witness, that having overcome all his Enemies, he was sat down at the Right Hand of his Father, after he had perform'd here whatever was necessary on his part for our Redemption, and had ascended up visibly in the Sight of his Apostles. These things are proved not simply by his Death or Resurrection, but his glorious Ascension above. It was his Ascension, not his Resurrection or Death, which was immediately followed with the Mission of the Holy Ghost; and therefore we may safely conclude, that he speaks of his Ascension, *ver. 5.* to which this refers, and is in the same Style; *I go my way to him that sent me.* But *S. Peter*, who had been one of the Hearers of these Words of our Saviour, shews us clearly enough, *Acts ii. 33.* after he had been filled with the Holy Ghost, how we are to understand them; where he tells the Jews, *Jesus being by the Right Hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear, i. e. the Gifts which were poured forth upon the Apostles and others on the Day of Pentecost.* The same thing that *S. Paul* acquaints us with, *Ephes. iv. 8.* where he saith, that *when Christ ascended up on high, he gave Gifts unto Men.* *Jesus Christ* then, by his *going away* here, does not so much mean his Death, as his Ascension into Heaven.

But it is natural to think, that if we had been in the Place of our Lord's Disciples, we would not have failed to answer him presently, when he said in general, that it was expedient for them that he should go away; how is it expedient that thou shouldst go away? or what Necessity is there for it? for that seems to be implied in the Particle *Nevertheless*, which refers to what immediately precedes; *Now I go my way to him that sent me; and Sorrow hath filled your Heart, because I have said these things unto you.* Canst thou not remain with us? and cause us at the same time to receive that Comforter whom thou hast

hast promised us shall come to us? It is not to be doubted, but the Disciples would willingly have made our Lord such a Reply, if the Fear of interrupting him in his Discourse had not hinder'd them. But tho', absolutely speaking, if such had been his Pleasure, he might have done this either before he died, or before he ascended into Heaven; yet it did not seem expedient, but otherwise very necessary for them; for as to his suffering Death first, what could have been done for them, or to what purpose, if he had not satisfied the Divine Justice for their Sins, by his Death? Could they ever be reconciled with God, or entitled to any Favour from him, without that Consideration, which the time was now come to be made good? And as to his ascending into Heaven, I may affirm in general, that the OEconomy, which the Three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity were pleased to observe between them in their Works, required it: They chose by a mutual Consent each of them their Time, to manifest themselves to Mankind. The Father manifested himself by the Dispensation of Nature, and the Law; the Son by the Promulgation of the Gospel, the Proclaiming of Salvation, and the Acquiring of Grace; and the Holy Ghost by the Application of the same Grace, and the Conversion and Sanctification of the Faithful. Under the OEconomy of Nature and the Law, as the Works of Creation and Providence were the chief Object of the Belief of Mankind, and they understood but imperfectly the Distinction of the Divine Persons; so their Worship terminated properly in the Father. Under the OEconomy of the Gospel, and the Redemption, we call upon the Son; and in him, and thro' him, we worship the Father. And therefore under the OEconomy of the Application of Grace, and the Sanctification of Men, it was necessary that the Holy Ghost should manifest himself more than the Son, that we might worship

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ship him also ; and consequently that the Son should return to Heaven. When the OEconomy of the Son succeeded that of the Father, the Father kept himself as it were hidden in Heaven ; and therefore that the OEconomy of the Holy Ghost might succeed that of the Son, it was requisite that the Son should leave the Earth. As the OEconomy of the Son manifests to Mankind the Glory of the Father, so the OEconomy of the Holy Ghost manifests likewise to them the Glory of the Son ; and consequently it was necessary and expedient in general, for our Lord's Disciples, that he should go away. Which will farther appear, when I come to my Second Head ; the particular Reasons he gives for his Departure from them.

Now if any one shall object here, that this seems to suppose that the Disciples had not yet received the Holy Ghost ; the Contrary whereof may be easily proved : What has been said above, concerning the Mission of the same Spirit, after our Lord was ascended into Heaven, furnishes us with a plain Answer, if we duly attend to it. I own then, that they had already received the Holy Ghost, in some measure, if the Objection goes no farther. They had *believed with the Heart, and confessed with the Mouth*, that *Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God*, John vi. 69. And *S. Paul* tells us, 1 Cor. xii. 3. that *no Man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*. They had *forsaken all, and followed him*, Matth. xix. 27. but *no Man can come to him, except the Father which hath sent him, draw him*, says he himself, John vi. 44. which is not done but by the Virtue of the Holy Spirit. But it must be acknowledged on the other side, that the Gifts which had then been imparted to them, were a very small matter, in Comparison of those which were shed forth upon them, and wherewith they were filled on the Day of *Pentecost*, in Consequence of his Ascension. The Spirit of God had acted in them before, but in a
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secret manner, known by few Persons; but on that glorious Day he communicated himself to them publickly, and with Splendor; and he endowed them with such extraordinary and miraculous Powers, as drew upon them the Admiration of a vast Multitude of People, who were come from all Parts to *Jerusalem* to celebrate the Feast. Moreover, as this Reception of the Holy Ghost was more Authentick and Magnificent than the first; so was it attended with greater Efficacy. Tho' they had before that time imbibed some Rays of the Light of the Holy Spirit, yet their Knowledge was so short and imperfect, that they did not apprehend that *Jesus Christ* was to suffer Death: They would by all means have brought him off of it, tho' it was the Foundation of their Salvation. But as soon as the Fire of those Tongues which sat upon them had enlightned their Minds, they comprehended both the Necessity of it, and all the Mysteries it included. They could not before bear *several things which he had to say unto them*, as he takes Notice in the Verse following; but then that *Spirit of Truth led them into all Truth*, as he had promised them he should; and not only so, but enabled them to impart it to all that would hearken to them. They knew so little before the Nature of his Kingdom, that they were continually disputing among themselves who should be the greatest in it; following the Error of the *Jews*, who would needs have it, that it would be an Earthly and Carnal one. But then they received another Spirit, which inspired them with so much Zeal for his Honour, that they gloried only in the Reproaches and Miseries they endured daily for his Name. So then the Disciples had received the Holy Ghost, absolutely speaking, before our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, and even before his Death; but not in his full measure, and in a publick miraculous manner, till the Day of *Pentecost*. Which our
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Saviour refers to in the Second Part of the Text, where he says to them, that *if he does not go away, the Comforter will not come unto them; but if he departs, he will send him unto them.*

By the *Comforter* here, we must understand the Holy Ghost, as I have already intimated; the Third Person in the glorious Trinity, whose Office it is, in a peculiar manner, to *comfort* us in our Afflictions, and to perform those things in, and for us, which are implied in that Title, according to its true and full Latitude. That this is so, there can be no Doubt made; since *Jesus Christ* styles him twice here above, *the Spirit of Truth; I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth*, Chap. xiv. 16, 17. and Chap. xv. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth.* The Word *Paraclete*, in the Original, is render'd, 1 *John*, ii. 1. *Advocate*; *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*; and both there, and in the place first cited, is applied to our blessed Saviour; for it is another *Comforter*, or *Advocate*, than I. But how it is distinguished in respect of these two Divine Persons, will easily appear from the Explication I shall give of it, as it is ascribed here to the Holy Ghost, in Contradistinction to *Jesus Christ*. This Term then, which in its Origin is *Greek*, but was used in the *Syriack* Tongue, which was that our Lord spoke during his Life, as the *Jews* then did, signifies in general, as the Learned observe, one who utters himself eloquently and agreeably; who is hearken'd to, not only with Attention, but also with Delight, by his Auditors; whether he teaches them, or comforts

3 Vide Discourse X. on *John* xiv. 16, 17.

them, or pleads for them ; for it is capable of these several Senses in Scripture, and applicable in them to the Holy Spirit ; as we shall see by and by. So that according to this Latitude, the Word implies a *Teacher*, who instructs after an engaging manner ; a *Comforter*, properly so called, who bespeaks the Afflicted according to their Heart ; and an *Advocate*, or Intercessor, who defends the Cause of the Accused ; every one of which Offices agrees to the Holy Ghost, not only with regard to the Disciples, on whom he was to descend, but to all the Faithful, in the succeeding Ages of the Church.

From this general Acceptation of the Word *Paraclete*, of acting upon the Minds of Men in a gentle way ; I might raise a just Prejudice against those who pretend to speak by his Inspiration, under the Evangelical Dispensation, with strange Convulsions of Nature ; as the ¹ *Quakers* at first, and the *New* ² *Prophets*, as they were called, lately did, to the great Surprize and Scandal of the Spectators. These latter, under unaccountable Agonies, with Heavings of the Breast, Distorsions of the Limbs, Grimaces of the Face, disorder'd Looks, Foaming of the Mouth, and other unnatural Actions, delivered their Extravagancies much after the manner of the *Heathen* Oracles ; which must be an Art they had brought over with them from the *Cevennes*, not certainly the soft Operations of the Holy Spirit. But the Events having confuted the Prophecies, it would be superfluous to say any thing to them ; and the Animadversion of the Law upon the chief Impostors, which could never be more seasonably used, has made it needless to prosecute this Argument, which makes strongly against them.

¹ Sleidan concerning the Anabaptists.

² Some French Refugees.

And therefore, to go on with the several Offices of the *Paraclete*; he is, 1. a *Teacher*, or *Exhorter*; as the Term *ἑκκαλῆν*, in the *Acts*, generally denotes *Teaching*, *Exhorting*, or *Preaching*. In reference to the Apostles, our blessed Saviour promises them, *John* xiv. 26. that *the Holy Ghost shall teach them all things, and bring all things to their Remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them*. And *S. Paul* declares, *2 Tim.* iii. 16. that *all Scripture*, (which is their *Preaching*) was given by *Inspiration of God*; and *S. Peter*, *2 Epist.* i. 21. that *the Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; which tho' meant there particularly of the *Old Testament*, may by *Parity of Reason* be applied to the *New*, and so be understood of the whole *Scripture*. And indeed he is *the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge*, as he is described *Is.* xi. 2. For in reference to the Faithful in general, as he is the *Spirit of Truth*, he guides them into all the Truth; all those Truths which are necessary to their Salvation. It is he openeth the Eyes of their Understanding, that they may apprehend the Mysteries of the Gospel, and who insinuates them into their Hearts, that they may make there a saving Impression; his Manner of teaching being as gentle, as the things which he teaches are; wherein the Spirit of Bondage, and the Spirit of Adoption, are diametrically opposite. Under the Law, the former taught indeed sometimes in a mild way; but then they were Matters dreadful and astonishing: He set forth the Justice of God, as flaming out against the Sins of Men, and armed with hot Thunderbolts, in order to punish them. The Prophetick Spirit, on the other hand, taught sometimes things sweet and acceptable; he renewed to the Church the Promise of a Redeemer, which was the Object of all its Wishes, and the Foundation of all its Hopes; but then he did it in a rough and violent manner, suitable to the Nature of that OEconomy. But under the Gospel,
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the Spirit of Adoption teaches us not only what is grateful, and fills our Souls with Consolation and Joy, but in the most attractive way imaginable. He is truly under that Dispensation a Paraclete, for his insinuating Manner of Teaching.

Now because we have one ¹ sort of Men amongst us, who scoff at the Mysteries of the Gospel, and will believe nothing in the *Christian* Religion, but what they can comprehend by Human Reason; and ² another, who attribute so much Strength to their Free-Will, as to think, that they stand in no need of any other Help to embrace them: I presume, it will not be amiss to explain this Matter a little farther; and to shew how the Holy Ghost is herein our Teacher. The Church then, as the Medium and Instrument through which we believe, conveying to us the Scripture, which is the Argument for which we believe; the Question is, what is the Principle, or the efficient Cause from which we believe; or whence it is that we have Faith, that Faith which justifies through *Jesus Christ*? It is somewhat surprising, that any one should venture to deny that there are Mysteries in that Scripture; much more to write a Book to prove it; since he may run that reads there those of the Creation of the World, the Redemption of Mankind, the Trinity in Unity, the Hypostatical Union, the Death of *Jesus Christ*, the Resurrection of the Dead: But the Secret is, that such Men would have them so explained, as to be no Mysteries. We must own them to have more Respect for the Word of God, who maintain, that the Sublimity of its Mysteries, the Holiness of its Precepts, the Certainty of its Prophecies, the Harmony of its Parts, the Majesty of its Style, and its End, whereby all is directed to

¹ Toland, and his Comrades.

² Pelagiani, & eorum sequaces.

the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men, carry their own Light and Endearment with them. But since every Man is, or ought to be, conscious of his own natural Blindness and Corruption; how can he pretend to understand that Wisdom in a Mystery, and to find out those unsearchable Riches of the Goodness of God, which are laid up in Scripture; much less to apply them to himself by a saving Faith, without a Divine Inspiration? *The Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are Foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,* says S. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 14. which is enough to decide the Question.

But to make this thing a little plainer; I say, that Faith, which is a Practical Assent to the Scripture, can proceed from no other Principle than the Holy Ghost, who is our Teacher in the Sense I am explaining. For, 1. we cannot acquire it by Human Reason; the Mysteries of Religion, which are its principal Object, being infinitely above it. Sin has so darken'd our Understanding since the Fall, that it can hardly know any thing certainly; all is Obscurity and Doubt in us; and we are often deceived in what is most natural, and comes under our senses. And how should we apprehend what is supernatural, and falls not within the Reach of our Minds? But if we could discover those sublime Truths by the Light of Nature; our Will is so corrupt and depraved, that far from embracing them, we have a perfect Aversion to them; we hate them, and cannot look upon them. The natural Blindness and Corruption of Man, cannot then doubtless be the Principle of Faith in his Soul. Neither 2. can the Doctrine of Scripture itself, with all its native Brightness, and intrinsic Notes of Divinity, for want of a Subject fitly disposed to receive it. Which I ground upon the same Reasons, that I now offered upon the foregoing Article. For that Doctrine, as to its mysterious Part, and which he must believe to be

be saved, being naturally above the Understanding of Man; how shall he assent to it, if he does not apprehend it? And if he could apprehend it; since his Will is so averse to it, how shall he embrace it, and apply it to himself? He can know, or believe nothing for his Salvation, as he should; unless the Holy Ghost intervenes. It is he must heal the Diseases of his Soul, enlighten his Understanding, and rectify his Will; cause the Scales to fall off his Eyes, as he did to *S. Paul*; and raise his Faculties and Affections so high, as to put them into a kind of supernatural State, whereby he may believe and embrace by a saving Faith, what he could not by the Force of Nature.

This the Holy Ghost performs, in working Faith in our Souls, by two different Acts, as we may distinguish them for our better conceiving this Matter. One is called Illumination, which is that Action of the Spirit, whereby the sacred Scripture being proposed to our Soul with all its Truth and Beauty, he so disposes its Faculties and Affections, that it easily perceives and embraces that Object, as the Means of its Happiness. This is the first Act of the Holy Ghost, whereby he directly operates upon the Soul, and without which it could never discern the Object of Faith, much less apply it to itself. For as it is in vain to bring Light before a blind Man, or to convey Meat into a Stomach that kecks against it, and will not receive it; so he must open the Eyes of our Understanding, that we may behold the wondrous things of God's Law, and remove the Aversion of our Will, before we can adhere to the Mercies of his Gospel. But there is another Act of the Holy Spirit, which may be termed Conviction; whereby he works by way of Reflexion upon the Soul, and makes it discern the Principle of its Faith, to assure it of its Certainty beyond all Doubt; and of its Divine Extraction, without a Possibility of proceeding from any where else. It is that where-

by he calls upon it to judge of the efficient Cause, which has propos'd to it such an Object, and render'd it capable to apprehend and embrace it. It cannot be I, says the Mind of Man under its natural Corruption, that have revealed to myself the My-
 steries of Scripture, or drawn me to the Application of God's Mercies to myself. I am too sensible of my own Darkness and evil Disposition, to think I can reach their Sublimity, much less stick close to their Charms: They must come to me from some supernatural Agent, which has inspired them into me. Whence it concludes, that its Faith is wrought by a Divine Operation; which, as the Scripture informs it, must be ascribed to the Person of the Holy Ghost. The Matter is nice; but by such an Explanation, whereof none can doubt, since we feel it in ourselves, methinks it should be intelligible.

But, 2. the *Paraclete* is a *Comforter* properly so called, or rather *the Comforter* by Excellency. If we consider the Text particularly, in relation to the Disciples, to whom it was spoken; and with regard to the Verses preceding; *Jesus Christ* promises them there, that the Holy Ghost should so support and comfort them in all their Afflictions, that they would come off more than Conquerors. He had foretold them, that they should suffer many Tribulations after his going away from them: And therefore to relieve them in the Anguish they were already fallen into, he engages his Word to send them the Comforter. *They will cast you out of the Synagogues*, says he to them; *but be not troubled thereat*; you will have in yourselves the Consolation of that Misfortune, the Holy Ghost; who will make of your Hearts not Synagogues, but Temples consecrated to God, and his Service. They will deprive you of Life; but they can never take away from you that Divine Spirit, whereof you shall feel the comforting and quickning Vertue, even in Death itself. But in general, the Holy Ghost is the Comforter of the Faithful. It is
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he anoints them with the Oil of Gladness, and all his Operations consist in Comfort. If he enlighteneth our Minds, it is by dispersing that dismal Darkness which Sin had shed over them; and then the Knowledge of the Truth, which he inspires a good Soul with, gives it no less Joy, than the Light of the Sun brings to Nature, when he begins to appear upon the Horizon. If he sanctifies our Wills, by working in our Hearts the Christian Vertues, what greater Consolation can a just Man enjoy amidst the Disorders of this World, than to meet with Occasions of doing Works acceptable to God! In short, it is that Holy Spirit who comforts the Faithful, both in the Afflictions of this Life, and the Agonies of Death.

And, 3. the *Paraclete* is likewise an Advocate or Intercessor, who pleads for the Accused. If we apply the Words to the Disciples, to whom they were immediately directed, and explain the Term by what follows after in the Context; we shall find, that *Jesus Christ* assures them here of the Coming of the Holy Ghost, to defend the Cause of *Christ*, and his Gospel, by the extraordinary Gifts he would bestow upon them for that purpose. He tells them in the Verses immediately following, that *when he, the Paraclete, is come, he will convince the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment*: Which is the Part of an Advocate, who by the Force of his Arguments silences those that oppose the Truth, or accuse it of Falshood. This the Holy Spirit did by the Mouth of the Apostles, when, after our Lord had commissioned them thereunto, they went and preach'd the Gospel throughout the World, being endow'd with Power from on High. But the Holy Ghost is likewise an Advocate or Intercessor, in respect of all the Faithful; who speaks in them and for them such things, as they would never have been able to think of without his Assistance. It is he helps our Infirmities, when we call upon God: For *we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it-*

self maketh Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26. When we implore the Divine Mercy with Faith and Zeal, it is not so much we, as that Heavenly Advocate that speaks for us, and pleads our Cause before God. And so we need not doubt of his Assistance, if we are brought before Magistrates, to answer for our Faith: For it is not we that speak, but the Holy Ghost, Mark xiii. 11.

Now as to the Reasons in particular which *Jesus Christ* gives his Disciples in the second Part of our Text, which remains to be handled for the Necessity and Expediency of his going away from them; the first is, that *if he does not go away, the Comforter will not come unto them*; which is grounded upon these several Considerations: 1. The Prophecy of *David*, Ps. lxxviii. 18. which makes the Coming of the Holy Ghost, a Consequence of the Triumph of *Jesus Christ*, was to be fulfilled; *Thou hast ascended on High, thou hast led Captivity Captive; thou hast received Gifts for Men; yea, for the Rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them*. For this *Ascending on High*, according to the best Expositors, refers in its mystical Sense to the Exaltation of our Lord; and the *Receiving of Gifts for Men*, to the Distribution of them, upon the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. 2. The chief Office of the Holy Ghost being to convert Men, by applying to them what *Jesus Christ* had done for them; it was expedient, and even necessary, that he should go thro' the whole Work of our Redemption on his part, before the other could set about his: Or in other Terms, that Satisfaction should be given to the Justice of the Father, and the Blood of the Son should be shed to merit Salvation for us, before the Holy Ghost could apply to Mankind that Satisfaction and Merit. 3. We are taught above, Chap. xiv. 16, 17. that the Mission of the Holy Ghost was to be the Effect of the Intercession of *Jesus Christ*;

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. But our Lord did not enter upon the solemn Exercise of his Intercession in his Father's House, whereof he speaks there, till after his Resurrection from the Dead, and his Ascension into Heaven. Fourthly, and lastly, the Holy Ghost was to be bestowed upon the Church, to be her Comforter; and to supply the Corporeal Absence of her Spouse *Jesus Christ*, and to be the Pledge of his Affection and Return. Upon which Account *S. Paul* styles him, (the Holy Spirit) *Ephes. i. 13, 14. the Seal wherewith we are sealed, and the Earnest of our Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchased Possession; i. e. till our Lord come again himself to complete the Redemption of his Church.* It was therefore necessary and expedient to that End, that *Jesus Christ* should go away from his Disciples; for if he did not go away, the Comforter would not come unto them.

The second Reason *Jesus Christ* gives his Disciples why he should go away from them, is, that *if he departed, he would send the Comforter unto them.* Waving here the particular Considerations upon which this Reason is grounded, as coincident with the foregoing, we may distinguish two Kinds of Mission of the Holy Ghost applicable to this place; one was Extraordinary and Publick, which happened on the Day of *Pentecost*, when in pursuance of his Promise here, and of baptizing his Apostles with the Holy Ghost, *Acts i. 5.* he caused him to descend upon them in a visible and solemn manner: And the other is Ordinary and Private, which falls out daily in Behalf of the Faithful, to endue them with Knowledge and Grace in order to their attaining Salvation. What is especially to be taken Notice of here is, that the Mission of the Holy Spirit is

in Scripture attributed sometimes to the Father, and sometimes to the Son, as in the fore-cited Passages, *John* xiv. 26. *The Comforter, whom the Father will send in my Name*; and *Chap.* xv. 26. *The Comforter whom I will send unto you from the Father*; besides the Text we are upon. But this is easily explained, tho' it was much controverted formerly between the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches. The Father is said to send him, because in the Work of our Redemption the Father ought to be considered as the first Principle, and the Director of the whole Transaction, nothing being done therein but by his Order: And the Son is likewise said to send him, because he merited the Sending of him to us by his Death, and obtained it by his Prayer of the Father, who could not refuse him what he ask'd for the Salvation of his Church. Whence we may not infer, however, that the Holy Ghost is inferior to *Jesus Christ*; for as he was not inferior to the Father, as to his Divinity, because he sent him into the World, and he therein obeyed his Order; so the Holy Ghost, in the same respect, is not inferior to *Jesus Christ*, because he sent him to the Apostles soon after his Ascension into Heaven, and does it still daily into the Hearts of the Faithful. The three Persons in the Divine Unity are Co-equal, as to their Godhead; and if one obeyed the other, it was by a mutual Consent; and because they are one in Essence, as well as in Will; and to the end all things should be done in Order in so sublime a Project.

It is observable upon the whole Text, that the manner after which our Saviour speaks there, both of himself and the Holy Ghost, affords us the following Doctrines: 1. That *Jesus Christ* is over all, *God blessed for ever*. For if he were not God, how could he talk of sending the Holy Ghost? What other than God could bestow so inestimable a Gift upon Mankind? 2. That the Holy Ghost is likewise God, and not a Creature, as the *Arians* must hold,

hold, if they will be consistent with themselves: For if he were but a Creature, what Solidity would there be in the Comfort *Jesus Christ* pretends to administer here to his Disciples? The Reason he alleges why it was expedient that he should go away, because he would send them the Comforter, would not be concluding. The Presence of a Creature, how perfect soever we can imagine it, could not be sufficient to comfort them for his Absence, who was God. It would have been, to go about to solace them for the Loss of an infinitely valuable Treasure, by promising them a thing of little or no Worth. 3. That the Holy Ghost is a Person really subsisting in itself, and of itself, and not an Energy, Virtue, or Power, as the *Macedonians* maintain'd; for none ever expressed himself of sending such a thing in the Style our Lord does the Holy Ghost. 4. That the Holy Ghost proceeds equally from the Father, and the Son; or from the Father, thro' the Son, as it was afterwards determined in the Council of *Florence*: For if he proceeded from the Father only, as the *Greeks* pretended, *Jesus Christ* could not say here to his Disciples, to comfort them for his Departure, that he would send him unto them.

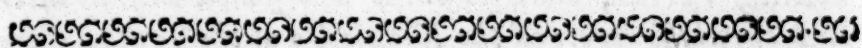
To conclude what has been said, by a short, but summary Application; let us rejoice, or rather comfort ourselves in this, that if our blessed Saviour is withdrawn from us, he has left behind him a good Deputy, to whom he has committed the Care of us, and our Salvation. He has indeed separated himself from us for a Time, as to his Corporeal Presence; but he has sent us his Holy Spirit to abide with us for ever. Let us not seek him upon Altars, after a Carnal manner, as those of the *Romish* Communion do; he has gone thro' his Journey, and is return'd into his own Country: His Abode here was no longer necessary for us; he has dwelt with us his full Season; and he has done all on his part that was

requisite for our Redemption: It was expedient that he should go away, that he might send us the Comforter. He is come now, that Divine *Paraclete*, to supply the Absence of our gracious Lord; we experience it daily. For what is he wanting in, to perform towards us, of what belongs to his Office, if we do the Duty on our side? He is our Teacher, who leads us into all the Truth; our Comforter, who supports us in all our Afflictions; and our Advocate, who pleads our Cause for us before the Throne of Grace. Follow we his holy Precepts; rejoice we in his endearing Comforts; and be we directed by his wholesome Counsels, expecting the glorious Return of our Redeemer to us; who then shall never leave us again, but will translate us into those eternal Mansions whither he went to prepare a Place for us; that where he is, there we may be also. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant!

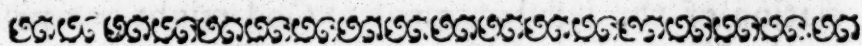




DISCOURSE XII.



The Punishment of Apostasy.



HEBR. X. 28, 29.

He that despised Moses's Law, died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses: Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace?



THE Apostle in this Epistle having represented to the *Hebrews*, how much the Gospel was above the Law; he had set forth to them at the same time, how the Excellency of the New Covenant, under which God heaped up so many Favours upon them, indispensably obliged them to stand fast in the Faith; taking heed,
that

that they did not pollute their Conscience with any Sin, and provoking one another by an holy Emulation unto Love, and to good Works. But knowing withall, that there were already prophane Men amongst them, as particularly a sort of *Gnosticks*, who turned the Grace of God into Dissoluteness, and gave up themselves to Vice, upon Presumption that they should be pardon'd, since so much Mercy was shewn under the Evangelical Dispensation: He had denounced thereupon the most dreadful Threats against such. He had declared positively in the preceding Verses, that *for them who sinned wilfully after that they had received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remained no more Sacrifice for Sins; but a certain fearful Looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* And that this Denunciation of the just Judgment of God might not pass in the Mind of those Sinners for a Threat, whereof the Effect was not much to be dreaded; he lays it down in our Text, that since those who despised the Law of *Moses* were put to Death without Mercy; it was not to be doubted, but the Contemners of the Gospel would be more rigorously punish'd, since they despised a Covenant incomparably more excellent. *He that despised Moses's Law*, says he, *died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses: Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace?* I would desire here our *Deists*, *Arians*, and *Socinians*, those great Pretenders to Reason, to consider seriously, whether these Words in some measure may not as properly be applied to them, as to the *Gnosticks*, those old Boasters of their Knowledge.

But to proceed methodically in the handling of this Text; I shall treat, 1. of the Despising of *Moses's*

1 Clendon, Whiston, & alii.

Law, and the Punishment of those that did so ; 2. of the Sin of those that despise the Gospel, and the Punishment they are to expect for it ; 3. I shall shew, according to the Scope of the Author, how just it is, that the Punishment of those that despise the Gospel, should be much sorer, than of those that had despised the Law.

None is ignorant, I presume, that the Law of *Moses* was the Covenant which God enter'd into with the *Israelites*, after he had delivered them out of the Bondage of *Egypt*. In that Covenant he manifested himself to them as the Sovereign Lord of all things, who had a Right to exact a perfect Obedience from his reasonable Creatures, and to punish them according to the Rigour of his Justice, if they refused or failed to obey him ; for which Reason he appeared to the Children of *Israel*, but with dreadful Signs of Greatness and Majesty. Being not able to bear the Splendor of it, and fearing to be consumed by the Presence of so terrible a God, they begg'd earnestly that he would appoint *Moses* to be Mediator betwixt him and them. *Speak thou with us*, said they to *Moses*, *and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us, lest we die* ; *Exod. xx. 19*. According to this Request, God used to speak to *Moses*, and *Moses* to the People, as from God : And therefore both here and elsewhere, that Law is call'd the Law of *Moses* ; wherein God promised the *Israelites* a long and happy Life in the Land of *Canaan*, plentiful Years, victorious Armies, and, in a word, all manner of Prosperity ; provided they observ'd all his Precepts, submitted themselves wholly to the Polity he had ordained amongst them, and practis'd exactly the Ceremonies he had enjoined them ; which made a considerable Part of the Worship he expected from them under that OEconomy. For the Stipulating Clause of that Covenant was, as our Saviour expresses it, *Luke x. 28*. *This do, and thou shalt live ; and cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which*

which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them, Gal. iii. 10. It was then necessary for them, either to fulfill the whole Law, or to incur the Curse it denounced against the Transgressors of it. So much concerning the Nature of that Law considered in itself; let us now see what it was to despise it.

To despise the Law then, does not signify here, simply, to sin against it; for there were several Offences, for the Expiation whereof it admitted of Sacrifices, and which it did not punish with temporal Death, as that the Apostle speaks of here. The Term in the Original, *Ἀθετήσας*, which we have translated by that of *despising*, imports properly, to *set at nought*, *reject*, or *abolish*. And S. Paul seems here to have in his Eye two kinds of Sin particularly, *viz.* that which was committed presumptuously, and Apostasy, *i. e.* the Sin of those who forsook the Jewish Religion to embrace the Pagan: The former is mentioned, Numb. xv. 30. by the Expression of *doing ought* (against the Mosaick Law) *presumptuously*, or with an high Hand. It is observable, that in that Chapter Sins are divided into two Classes; one whereof contains those committed thro' Ignorance; and the other thro' Presumption, and wilfully and obstinately. As to the former, if they were committed by Ignorance, without the Knowledge of the Congregation, the Priest was to make an Atonement for all the Congregation, and they were forgiven them, and so was the Person who had committed them ignorantly, upon his bringing his Offering, which was admitted in that Case. But as for those who sinned presumptuously, there was no Sacrifice allowed for them; *The Soul that did so, was to be cut off from among his People; because he had despised the Word of the Lord, his Iniquity was to be upon him.* The Truth is, all such Sins proceeding from a Spirit of Rebellion and Malice, tho' they may be levelled but against one Commandment of the Law, do yet in the Bottom imply a manifest Con-

Contempt of the whole. It is scarce possible that any who have the least Respect for that Divine Law, should be carried on by a pure Principle of Wickedness to violate it with an high Hand, *i. e.* to sin for Sinning-sake. The smallest Faults thus committed become Diabolical Crimes, which fall foul directly upon God, the Author of that Constitution; and shew plainly enough, that the Transgressors have absolutely renounced his Authority, and set at nought his Statutes. And as to the other kind of Sin, which the Apostle has here probably in his Eye, *viz.* that of Apostasy, we meet with it *Deut.* xvii. 2, 3, 4, 5. where it is expressly enjoined, that *he be put to Death, whoever hath transgressed the Covenant of the Lord, and hath gone and served other Gods, and worshipped them; i. e.* hath abandon'd the Religion prescribed in the Law of *Moses*, and profess'd *Paganism*. And indeed they express'd a strange Contempt for that Divine Institution, who thus quitted it to follow the Extravagancies and shameful Mysteries of the *Heathens*. This was equally to despise the Evils it threatned the Transgressors with, and the Goods it promis'd its Observers. Those who committed this Sin, abolish'd as far as in them lay the Law of God; they violated it wholly by that one Action: By joining themselves with the *Gentiles*, they renounced their Circumcision, which was the Seal of that Covenant, and which they had receiv'd to distinguish them from all the other Nations of the World. In short, by forsaking the *Jewish* Communion, they rejected the Worship of the true God, to serve dumb Idols: For God had revealed himself then but to *Jacob*, he had given his Statutes and his Ordinances but to *Israel*; he had left all the other People of the Earth in the thickest Darkness of Error and Idolatry.

Both these Crimes, which I have said *S. Paul* seems here to have in his Eye, deserved doubtless an exemplary Punishment. And indeed he tells us, *i.* that they were punished with Death, *i. e.* temporal

poral Death ; for he speaks of a Death whereunto those Despisers of *Moses's* Law were condemned, upon the Testimony of two or three Witnesses ; which cannot be understood of eternal Death, which is inflicted not upon the Testimony of Men, but of Conscience ; not before Human Tribunals, but that of God who knoweth all things, and has no need of any Witnesses. Not but those Sinners were likewise exposed to eternal Death ; but the Apostle does not urge that here, because he is disputing against Carnal Men, upon whom the Torments of the other World, which they consider as at Distance, make but little Impression. And therefore to affect them the better, he lays before them what was most likely to touch them, and what they saw with their Eyes, being publicly executed. *They died*, says he, or were put to temporal Death. The *Jews* had four Sorts of Executions amongst them to punish capitally their respective Malefactors with, viz. Hanging, Beheading, Burning, and Stoning. * We are not expressly told here, how the Contemners of the *Mosaical* Law died. But *Deut. xvii. 5.* God commands positively that they be stoned with Stones till they die. This was the Torment the *Jews* used commonly to inflict in the Case of the most enormous Crimes. But, 2. it is added in our Text, that they died thus without Mercy ; and indeed, *Deut. xiii. 6. to 12.* where *Moses* speaks of those, who, having hatch'd in their Hearts the wicked Design of forsaking the true Religion, to follow Idolatry, endeavour to entice others into the same Excess of Impiety ; God enjoins strictly all that have any Knowledge of it, not to conceal them, and even to be the first to punish them, tho' they should be the dearest Relations they have in the World. *If thy Brother*, says he, *ver. 6. the Son of thy Mother, or thy Son, or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Bosom, or thy Friend which is as thine own Soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other Gods ; thine Eye shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt*

shalt thou conceal him, ver. 8. but thou shalt surely kill him; thine Hand shall be first upon him, to put him to Death, ver. 9. The Israelites are commanded, *ver. 12. to 17. even utterly to destroy whole Cities, when the Inhabitants are turn'd Idolaters; to smite the very Cattle with the Edge of the Sword; to burn all the Houses, and all the Spoil; the City to be an Heap for ever, never to be built again.* Which was so exactly observ'd, that it was not in the Power of the *Sanhedrin*, or even of the King himself, to pardon those who were convicted of that Crime. I say convicted, because, 3. the Law did not allow, as it is here intimated, that Offenders should be put to Death, but under two or three Witnesses. Which is evident from *Numb. xxxv. 30.* and other parallel Places; particularly *Deut. xvii. 6.* where it is expressly declared, that *at the Mouth of two Witnesses, or three Witnesses, shall he that is worthy of Death, be put to Death; but at the Mouth of one Witness, he shall not be put to Death.* This may be sufficient with relation to the despising of *Moses's* Law, and the Punishment of those that did so; especially in the Cases of the Sins of Presumption and Apostasy. Pass we now therefore to the second thing proposed, *viz.* the Sin of those that despise the Gospel, and the Punishment they are to expect for it; for it is plain from the *Antithesis* in the Words, that this must be the Meaning of it.

The Gospel then is the Covenant God made with Mankind, by giving them his Son *Jesus Christ*, that whosoever should believe in him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life. In which Covenant, God behaved himself towards Men as a kind Father; who having disobedient Children, uses all the Means his Paternal Goodness can suggest to him to reconcile them to their Duty; to the end he may make them enjoy his Benefits. When they were at War with him by their Sins, he did not send them a Prophet or an Angel to reprove them for their Undutifulness, or to lay before them the Horror of their Sins,

Sins, and the Precipice they were falling into; that would have been to little Purpose. They were running into eternal Perdition with such Fury, as neither Admonitions nor simple Chastisements could stop: All this would but have irritated them, given them Occasion to do worse and worse, and aggravated their Condemnation. On the other hand, the Divine Justice required Satisfaction for their Crimes, before infinite Mercy should save them; and therefore he deputed to them his well-beloved Son. In making whom Mediator of this Covenant, which he was pleased to enter into with us, he caused him to take our Nature upon him, and to be our Brother according to the Flesh; he put him in our Place, to put us in his; he obliged him to suffer the Punishment of our Sins, to bestow upon us the inestimable Reward of his perfect Obedience, *i. e.* everlasting Bliss, which he graciously promises us, provided we believe in him; for that is the Covenanting Clause of the Gospel; *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*, Acts xvi. 31. *God so loved the World*, John iii. 16. *that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

One would think that so gracious a Covenant, and so advantageous to Mankind, could never be despised, as *S. Paul* supposes here, by deterring the *Hebrews* from falling into so great a Crime. And yet it is certain, that we deliberately committ no Sin, but it shews plainly enough, that we have not for it all the Respect we should. However, by those that despise the Gospel, the Apostle does not mean here all Sorts of Sinners, otherwise we should be all undone; for how often have we violated the holy Precepts it directs to us? But the Sin understood in this Place, as appears by the Connexion, is 1. that he speaks of in the Verses immediately preceding, which is committed *after that Men have received the Knowledge of the Truth*. So that according

ing to that Description of this Sin, Men must have received the Knowledge of the Truth. These are they whom *Jesus Christ* mentions in the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, recorded *Matth. xiii. who hear the Word with Joy, but have no Root in themselves.* They rejoice indeed at its Light, but it is but for a while; *they taste the good Word of God*, as it is express'd, *Chap. vi. 5. of this Epistle*; but they do not digest it; *their Souls are not thereby nourish'd up in the Hope of everlasting Life*; they are but temporary Believers. And, besides, they must sin wilfully, obstinately, or presumptuously, *i. e.* without being engaged to it by any Fear or Hope. Those who are driven into a deliberate Sin by the Fear of some great temporal Evil, shew indeed that they have not that infinite Value and inviolable Affection they should for the Gospel; they weigh things in another Balance than that of the Sanctuary; the Sufferings of the present time prevail in their Minds over the Glory which is to come; but yet it cannot be said of them properly, that they sin wilfully, and *tread under Foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and do Despite unto the Spirit of Grace*; or that it is impossible to *renew them again unto Repentance*, which is another Character of the Crime in the Text, *Chap. vi. 4, 6.* We have an illustrious Instance of the contrary in *S. Peter*; or, if that will not come up to the Case, in several other Persons during the first Ages of *Christianity*, who having fallen into the same Sin with him, but aggravated with worse Circumstances, had been raised up by the same Grace. And as to those who are drawn in by the Hope of temporal Advantages, it is certain they are in a much more bitter Gall of Iniquity than the Timorous: They sin to obtain the Honours or Pleasures of the World, whereas the others do it only to save their Lives, or what is necessary to support them. Notwithstanding
T God,

God, who knows they transgress, not so much out of Contempt of him, as by a foolish Admiration of the Things of the Earth, renews them again unto Repentance, and the Church admitts them to its Peace. There must therefore enter no Fear or Hope into the Motives of the Sin which is described here; wherein consists properly the heinous Nature of a wilful Transgression under the Gospel, answering to that of Presumption under the Law. For every Sin thus committed by a pure Spirit of Obstinacy, and with a high Hand, without Fear, without Hope, with a full Consent of the Will, and consequently with a Design to offend God, is a manifest Contempt of the whole Covenant of the Gospel, tho' in Appearance it is done only against one Precept of it; it is a direct Attracking the Sovereign Majesty of God, who is the Author of all of them.

And therefore, 2. the Sin meant here, is principally that which being committed after the Truth receiv'd, with this Spirit of Presumption and Rebellion, is heighten'd into Apostasy, or a Falling away from *Christianity*, to embrace any other Religion, answerably to abandoning the *Mosaical* Institution amongst the *Jews*, to follow the *Gentile* Superstition; for *S. Paul* had but just before exhorted the *Hebrews* not to forsake the *Assembling of themselves*, lest that Negligence should prove a Step to lead them into that Sin, for which, he subjoins, *there remaineth no more Sacrifice*; and which he farther describes here by these three Characters, *viz.* that those that are guilty of it, 1. *tread under Foot the Son of God*; 2. *count the Blood of the Covenant where-with they were sanctified an unholy thing*; 3. *do Despite unto the Spirit of Grace*; of which in their Order.

1. *To tread under Foot the Son of God*, is to despise him presumptuously and insolently; for we cannot

express a greater Contempt of a thing, than by treading it under Foot; and in this Case we despise *Jesus Christ*, when we entertain unworthy Apprehensions of his Person, or reject the holy Doctrine he has taught us. If it be true in general, that the Contempt of a Doctrine falls consequentially upon its Author, how much more is it so with relation to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who sealed his with his own Blood, and is not only the Author, but the Object and Foundation of it? But the Sinners the Apostle speaks of here, despise *Jesus Christ* in a far more heinous Manner; for as I have intimated already, they had received the Knowledge of his Truth with Gladness, and tasted the first Relish of that Joy which it carries with it. We are even told, *Chap. vi. 4, 5.* that *they had been enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly Gift, and the Powers of the World to come.* They had then a Faith, like in some respects to that of true Believers, and some Dawnings of Regeneration: And as it is there farther explained, *they had been made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good Word of God; Jesus Christ* had begun to be born and live in them. But those miserable Wretches, it seems, instead of going on from Faith to Faith, and from Knowledge to Knowledge, and of cultivating by a constant Practice of good Works that precious Bud of Immortality which was shooting forth in them, fall back sensibly into their first Corruption: They are not careful to avoid the Temptations of the World, and their own Flesh. And the Devil, who is always watching an Opportunity, observing their Carelessness, seizes a second time upon their Hearts, and drives thence as it were the Son of God, who began to make his Abode there, and thereby renders their last Condition worse than the first. Which gives Ground to the Author of this Epistle to say, in the last cited place, that they *crucify to themselves the Son of God*

afresh, and put him to an open Shame. They even thereby make themselves more criminous than the *Jews*, when they *crucify'd the Lord of Glory*. They did not then know him; for *if they had known him*, the Apostle tells us, *1 Cor. ii. 8. they would not have crucify'd him.* They did it thro' Ignorance, as *S. Peter* owns, *Acts iii. 17.* and therefore are exhorted to *Repentance*, ver. 19. our blessed Saviour by that Consideration having pray'd for them at the Cross; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*, *Luke xxiii. 34.* But these know him, as is evident from the Context, and the Description given of them in the other cited Passage; and what can we think of their Case? The *Jews*, it is true, put him to an open Shame; they deliver'd him up to the *Gentiles* to be used like a Slave, and punished as a vile Malefactor; but they did in that only what God's Hand and his *Counsel had determined before* to be done, *Acts iv. 28.* Whereas the others, by committing the Sin here spoken of, afford the Devil an Occasion to boast, that in them he has borne away the Victory from our Lord *Jesus Christ*; and this not at the time that he lay under Ignominy by the Will of his Father, but when he sitteth at his Right Hand in Glory. Lastly, the *Jews*, in causing our Saviour to die, thought they shed only the Blood of a common Man; but these, in contemning him thus, count, *2. the Blood of the Covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing.*

The Blood of *Jesus Christ* is the only Basis and Foundation of the Gospel; it is by that means that the Divine Justice being satisfy'd, and our Sins expiated, God is reconciled with us. And by the same means it is that we obtain the Spirit of Grace, whereby our Minds are enlightned, and we converted in order to our Salvation. It is that Blood which has drawn God to us, and drawn us back to him: It is therefore rightly styled the *Blood of the Covenant*; and the

the Faithful justly look upon it as the Foundation of all their Hopes, and the Spring of all the Graces they receive from Heaven. But notwithstanding these precious and saving Effects of it, there are Sinners impious enough, it seems, to despise it. Those the Apostle mentions here, *count it, i. an unholy or prophane thing*, tho' it be the Foundation of all the Holiness upon Earth. It is in the Original, Word for Word, to *hold common the Blood of the Covenant*. This is already a great Contempt in them, to set no higher a Value upon it, than to esteem it no more than common Blood. If the Death or Blood of God's Saints is *precious in his Sight*, as we are told it is, *Pf. cxvi. 15.* tho' it be but the Blood of feeble Men, and even of Sinners; how much more ought to be valued that of the only Son of God, of the Holy of Holies, poured out for the Salvation of Mankind! But the Author meaneth a great deal more, following herein the Style of the *Hebrews*, who use *Common for Prophane*; doubtless, because they held as prophane or unholy, things which were common among the *Gentiles*. He would say then, that those who wilfully fall off from the Truth of the Gospel, after they had received it, hold the Blood of *Jesus Christ* for prophane; because by thus departing from his Communion, they profess not to believe his Blood to be sufficient to cement between God and Man so excellent a Covenant as is that of the Gospel, or to obtain for them that embrace it with Faith, the precious Advantages it promiseth them. And indeed that is properly to hold the Blood of *Jesus Christ* for prophane; to look upon it as the Blood of an Impostor, who abused the Name of God to deceive Mankind. Who can, without Horror, think of the Enormity of so detestable a Crime? *Horror hath taken hold upon me, saith David, Pf. cxix. 53. because of the Wicked that forsake thy Law.*

But, what *S. Paul* addeth, that these Men had been *sanctified by the Blood of the Covenant*, aggravates yet more their Sin. It is certain, that those who, after they have received some of the Benefits which are conferr'd on Mankind, in Consideration of the infinite Merit of that Blood, are so wretched as presumptuously to despise it, not only as common, but prophane, must be infinitely more Criminous than those that do so, having never felt any of its precious Effects: For they thereby not only shew a Diabolical Pride, in despising a more inestimable Blood than Heaven and Earth, but they are guilty of a blacker Ingratitude than the Devils themselves. The Devils indeed despise that Blood, but it was never shed for them; whereas these do it, tho' it had begun to exert its Vertue in them, and work'd some Degree of Holiness in them; as I have before taken Notice. The Knowledge of the Gospel delivers Men gradually out of the Bondage of Sin and Corruption, according to what *Jesus Christ* tells the *Jews*, *John viii. 32. Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.* The Sinners here described had received some Knowledge of the Truth, and therefore they had already tasted the Sweetness of the Liberty of God's Children, and in some measure cast off the Yoke of Sin. They had in a manner escaped, as it is express'd, *2 Pet. ii. 20. the Pollutions of the World, thro' the Knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; but being again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter End becomes worse with them than the Beginning. By their Knowledge, and their Faith, as weak as they were, they had struggled for a time against Sin and the Devil; but being over-power'd by them, they fall anew under his Dominion, without any Hope of ever being rescued again. They remain eternally separated from God's Communion, *counting the Blood of the Covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and doing*

doing *Despise unto the Spirit of Grace*. Which last being the third Character of these Sinners, comes now to be consider'd.

By the *Spirit of Grace*, the Apostle doubtless understands the *Spirit of the Gospel*, which is the Covenant of Grace; that Spirit which *Jesus Christ* having merited by the Effusion of his Blood, and obtained the Mission of by his Intercession, he freely bestows upon his Children. This is that Spirit, who is the Spring of all the Graces we receive from above, and who works the Sense of them in us, by witnessing with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God. When he says in the Context, that they that *do Despise unto the Spirit of Grace*, are such as *sin wilfully, after that they have received the Knowledge of the Truth*; he supposes evidently that they had received this Spirit. And indeed he tells us expressly in the fore-cited Passage, viz. Chap. vi. 4. that they *had been enlightened, and made Partakers of the Holy Ghost*: Which will appear easily, if we reflect a little upon what has been said. They *had received the Knowledge of the Truth*: But if the Spirit of God does not enlighten the Hearts of Men, they are blind, and utterly incapable to see or receive the Truth of the Gospel. They had tasted the good Word of God, and received it with Joy; some of them had even wrought Miracles for the Confirmation of it: But without the Holy Ghost, none can so much as confess that *Jesus* is the Lord. They had then received the Spirit, who alone is the Author of these Graces: But it seems, they were not his saving Impressions which they had received. The Spirit God bestows upon his Children, is a Divine Fire, which not only enlightens them with the Knowledge of the Truth, but inflames them likewise with the Love of him, and with Zeal for his Glory. But these Men, it appears, had received but a Spark of it, which gave them indeed some Light at first, but was after-

wards extinguish'd by them, before it had wrought that Love, and that Zeal in their Hearts. Which *S. Paul* in all Probability means, when he says, that *these Sinners do Despise unto the Spirit of Grace*, i. e. that they quench the Light of that Day-spring from on High which began to rise in their Hearts; and by their continual Sins, joined with a Contempt of Truth and Holiness, do so far Despise unto the Holy Ghost, that he abandons them to their own Corruption, and will no longer shew forth his Virtue in Men, who affront him in such an outrageous manner. It is in the Original, *καὶ κατεβέβηκε τὸ πνεῦμα χάριτος*, and has reproached or contumeliously used the Spirit of Grace; which will make it fall in with the Blasphemy or Sin against the Holy Ghost. This Divine Spirit then being Holiness itself; it is true, there is no Sin but offends him. He is said to be grieved, *Ephes. iv. 30.* when the Faithful, in whom he dwells, instead of following his holy Directions, yield to the Lusts of their Flesh, and do not walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called. But he must be spited and vexed in the highest Degree, when he sees, that those who have in like manner tasted of the Heavenly Gift, resist his Divine Operation; and instead of yielding themselves to be guided by his Light, presumptuously run into the Darkness of Error and Vice, and put out that Candle which God had set up in their Souls. If the Weakness of the Faithful grieves him, the Rebellion of these Men affronts him; it being not conceivable, that a more provoking Insult can be offered him, than thus to despise his precious Gifts; to prefer Evil to Good, after he has given them Grace to distinguish them.

I presume, it appears pretty plain by this time, from the Explication I have given of the Crime of

¶ Vide Discourse X. on John xiv. 16, 17.

despising the Gospel, as it is set forth in the three Characters in the Text, *viz.* of Christians treading under Foot the Son of God; counting the Blood of the Covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing; and doing Despite unto the Spirit of Grace; that this Crime, I say, can be no other than the Sin of Apostasy: And that this is the Sin against the Holy Ghost, the irremissible Sin, the Sin unto Death. It is called, *vers.* 39. *ὑποσολὴ εἰς ἀπώλειαν*, a Drawing back unto Perdition; and *Chap.* vi. 6. *ἄρσενος*, a Falling away. But then it is likewise evident from what has been said, that it must have those various Conditions to constitute its Nature; 1. that it be an universal or fundamental Defection from the Christian Religion; 2. that it be committed after that a Man has received the Knowledge of the Truth, or has acknowledged the Gospel, and been convinced in his Conscience of its Goodness; 3. that it be a wilful, presumptuous and obstinate Sinning against it; not out of Fear of Evil or Human Weakness, or out of Hope of Advantage, but from a Principle of Malice and Rebellion; 4. that it be a persevering, spiteful, contumelious Resisting, Rejecting, and Detesting of the Operation of the Spirit of Grace; with a Contempt of all the Means of Salvation. Whence proceeds a final Impenitency, and the Unpardonableness of this Crime. All which being Characters of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, it can hardly be doubted that this is it. But the Examination of the second Article of this Head, *viz.* the Punishment they are to expect who thus despise the Gospel, will give us a farther Light into this Matter.

The Apostle tells us here, by way of Interrogation, that this Crime deserves a much sorer Punishment, than was inflicted upon the Despisers of Moses's Law, which was no less than Death without Mercy. But having, *vers.* 26. declared upon this account, that there

there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins; he adds immediately, *but a certain fearful Looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* And Chap. vi. 4, 5, 6. where he treats of this Subject, he says expressly, that it is impossible (for those who had embraced the Gospel) if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance. Agreeably to what we meet with from our Lord's own Mouth, *Matth. xii. 31, 32. and Mark iii. 29. He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never Forgiveness, but is in Danger of eternal Damnation.* And therefore S. John, 1 Epist. v. 16. calls this a Sin unto Death; and subjoins thereupon, *I do not say that the Brother (of any Man that sees him sin it) shall pray for him.* Upon the whole then, these wretched Sinners shall be punish'd both in this World, by a terrible Expectation of the just Judgment of God; and in the next, by the eternal Flames, which he has prepared to torment his Adversaries with. Tho' they have rejected the Truth, and the Grace of God, that nothing might disturb them in the Enjoyment of their sinful Pleasures, and the Satisfying of their brutish Passions; they can never cast off the Remorses of a guilty Conscience, which perpetually terrifies them with the Enormity of their Crimes; nor avoid the Justice of the Almighty, with whom they are at War, and the Torments his Vengeance has appointed for them. And if the bare Thought of the Punishment they must expect hereafter, is enough to make them miserable in this Life; what will their Condition be after Death, when they shall be tumbled headlong into outer Darkness, where there is eternal Weeping, and Gnashing of Teeth! Behold, ye Despisers, and wonder, and perish! For you are to look for nothing but a fiery Indignation; or, as it is properly in the Original, a *Jealousy of Fire*, which shall devour you, because you are God's Adversaries. S. Paul styling this Fire *jealous*, has as it were *animated it*; as
if

if this Creature, jealous with a holy Jealousy for the Glory of the Creator, were to double its ordinary Heat, the more cruelly to burn his Enemies. Let me not be told here, that the Gospel is a Covenant of Grace and Mercy; for that is one of the Reasons why these Sinners should be more sorely punish'd, and without any Hope of Pardon. Those who despised *Moses's* Law, might sometime avoid the Punishment due to their Crime; their Judges were but Men: And if they had not at least two or three Witnesses, they could not convict them, nor consequently condemn them. It is true, there is but one Witness here; but what need is there of any more to convict them? it is the Sinner's own Conscience. Or rather what need is there of any Witnesses at all? since God himself is the Judge, unto the Eyes of whom all things are naked and opened.

This is, you will say, a dreadful Punishment, infinitely greater than that which was laid on those that despised *Moses's* Law: One was but a temporal Death, but the other is Death eternal. One was inflicted but by mortal Men, who can only kill the Body, without any way hurting the Soul; but the other is imposed by him, who, when he will, can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell. And yet it is so just, that these latter Sinners should be thus punish'd; that the Apostle makes no scruple to submit it to the Judgment of those he writes to: *Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, says he, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace?* Which brings me to my third and last Head, viz. to shew, according to the Scope of the Author in this Argument, how just it is, that the Punishment of those that despise the *Gospel*, should be much sorer, than of those that despised the *Law*, because their Crime is greater.

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This is evident, 1. from what has been said above, both concerning the Nature of the Law and of the Gospel. Under the former, God manifested his Justice; but under the latter, he displays his Clemency. There he used his absolute Right, and his infinite Power, as Sovereign Lord of all his Creatures; enjoining the *Israelites* a multitude of most difficult things, without minding whether they could perform them or no; declaring to them, that he would punish them according to his Severity, if they discharged them not perfectly; and promising them but a limited and earthly Recompence, if they fulfilled them all exactly. But here he has as it were divested himself of that great Title of Absolute Master of all things, to put on all the Tenderneſs of a kind Father, who is willing at any rate to win over by his Benefits his ungrateful and rebellious Children; ordering them but very easy Practices; supplying them even with the Strength and Means to accomplish them, and reaching out to them for their Encouragement an infinite Reward. As then disobedient Children, who should refuse to submit to so good a Father, would be without Comparison much more criminous than refractory Servants, who should attempt to cast off the Yoke of an arbitrary and imperious Master; so it is plain, that those that despise the Mercy of God under the Gospel, are abundantly more guilty, than those that despised the Righteousness of the Law. If these were punish'd with a temporal Death, because they renounced the Hope of a temporal Recompence, so difficult to obtain; how much more just is it, that those should be punish'd with eternal Death, who forego an eternal Reward, so easy to be acquired! The Fault of those that despised the Law, might in some measure be attributed to the Difficulty of the Performances it enjoined them; for who could avoid being frightened with the Multiplicity of the Ceremonies it imposed,
and

and with the Threats it denounced against those that should fail to observe its Ordinances? But the Yoke of the Gospel is easy, and its Burden is light, gentle, and pleasing: So that the Crime of those that refuse to comply with it, can proceed only from pure Malice and Obstinacy.

But, 2. these Men reject both the eternal Son of God, and the Holy Ghost. Whereas those that despised the *Mosaical* Law, rejected only a Doctrine publish'd by a Man, viz. *Moses*, who was besides incomparably less concerned in the Contempt of that Law, than is *Jesus Christ* in that of the Gospel, upon these following Accounts: 1. *Moses*, it is true, gave the Law to the People of *Israel*, after he had received it from God: But he did not give himself to those that should embrace it; it was not founded upon him. *Jesus Christ*, on the contrary, gives himself to those that embrace his Gospel: This new Covenant is wholly founded upon him, and his Merit: Which makes *S. Paul* say here, that the Despisers of the Gospel tread under Foot the Son of God; though he had used no such Expression concerning *Moses*, in speaking of the Contempt of the Law. What Insolence, to despise the Son of God, God himself, over all things, blessed for ever! What Ingratitude, to tread him under Foot, who humbled himself even to Death, only that he might exalt us into Glory! 2. In despising *Moses's* Law, Men did not despise the Blood of *Moses*: And if they had, it would have been but a small Matter, comparatively with despising the Blood of *Jesus Christ*. *Moses* was but a feeble Man, naturally like unto others: But it was only the Blood of Bulls and Goats which Men despised, that was the Blood of the Law. Whereas whoever despises the Gospel, despises the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, wherewith that holy Covenant was sealed; the Blood of the only Son of God; a Blood of infinitely more Value, than all the Creatures

tures in the World. A Blood which takes away Sins; and by the Virtue whereof those Wretches, of whom the Apostle speaks here, had been already in some measure *sanctified*: Whereas the Blood of the Law was so far from cleansing the Sinners, that it did but convince them of their Crimes, and shew them the Necessity of a more perfect Sacrifice to expiate their Sins. 3. In violating the Law, Men offended only the Spirit of Bondage; but in contemning the Gospel, they do Despite unto the Spirit of Adoption. Those who despised the Spirit of Bondage, seemed to do it to avoid Bondage; but those who condemn the Spirit of Adoption, fly away thereby from the holy and glorious Liberty of the Children of God. Are they not therefore worthy of falling into the Power of the Prince of Darkness, *i. e.* into the infinite Torments of the Second Death?

This being the thing wherein the Force of *S. Paul's* Argument here consists, to conclude this *Discourse*, and indeed this whole *Treatise*; let us consider, 1. how distant his Reasoning is from that of those prophane Men, who fancy they may sin on, under Pretence they are not under the Law, but under Grace; and that they shall easily escape the just Judgment of God, because his Mercy appears so signal in the Gospel. But know this, O ye Sinners, who turn the Grace of God into Licentiousness, that you shall meet your Condemnation in that very Mercy, where you expect to find Impunity for your Sins. God is merciful, it is true; and it cannot be deny'd, that in the Gospel the Favours of his Mercy magnify themselves above the Judgments of his Justice. But it is a Mercy armed with Thunderbolts, and a terrible Vengeance against all such as shall be so impious as to despise it. The greater the Benefits are, which it offers to those who fly to it with Souls truly penitent; the more dreadful shall the Torments be, which it will cause the Refractory and Impe-

Impenitent to undergo. What Likelihood is there, that *Jesus Christ*, in dying for us, to redeem us from all Iniquity, should purchase us a Licence to serve Sin with Impunity, which is the sworn Enemy of his Glory?

As for us, 2. who are taught here by the Holy Apostle, that as the Mercies which are tender'd us in the Gospel, are very great; so the Punishment of those that despise that gracious Covenant, will be very terrible: Let us take special Heed, that we do not fall into so detestable a Crime. But particularly let us not think, that such an Exhortation is wholly impertinent to us, who profess to believe the *Christian* Religion, and have been admitted Members of the Catholick Church. We ought all to know, that there is scarce any kind of Sin, but may be aggravated with such Circumstances, as may make it amount to an entire Contempt of the whole Covenant of the Gospel; and consequently become irremissible, as well as an Apostasy committed through Presumption. I must own, there is in that Crime such an Heinousness, as seems to exceed the Bounds of Human Corruption. But yet it is but too true, that *the Heart of Man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* as God tells us by *Isaiah*, xvii. 9. We cannot say how far the Malice of our own Hearts, heightened by a long Habit of Sin, may extend. When the Devil perceives that a Man begins to relish the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; he does not presently entice him to the last Excesses of Impiety: He does not immediately suggest to him, to *despise the Gospel*, to *tread under Foot the Son of God*, to *count the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing*, and to *do Despite unto the Spirit of Grace*. That Wicked one knows, that he would not succeed in his pernicious Designs, if he should proceed so. And therefore he endeavours to lead him
insen-

insensibly into the Precipice, whereof the bare Thought would strike him with Horror, if he were apprehensive of it. But if he sees him have a particular Inclination to some Vice, as alas! we all have; he lays all manner of Temptations and Occasions in his way, to draw him in to committ it, and indulge himself in it. And then his Soul intoxicating itself with it, loses by little and little the Relish it tasted at first in Piety, and the Mysteries of the Gospel. In proportion as the Habit of Sin waxeth strong, the Seeds of Faith languish, and die away. It cannot be said yet however, that such Men tread under Foot the Son of God; but they have but a Luke-warmness, or even Indifferency for him. They do not yet count his Blood an unholy thing, but they set at nought the precious Benefits which flow from it. They do not yet do *Despise unto the Spirit of Grace*; but they grieve him to that degree, that he ceases to exert his Virtue in their Hearts. But the Devil, who is never asleep, and who waits but for these unhappy Minutes, renews the Temptation, and they fall again: They even go themselves to meet his Snares, and seek the Opportunities of sinning. And then God being justly provoked by their insolent Presumption, gives them up to their reprobate Sense; their Malice grows stronger and stronger in their Hearts; they go on from Iniquity to Iniquity, till they are so far sunk in Corruption, that what remains in them of the Knowledge of the Gospel, grows troublesome to them: Whence every Sin they committ, becomes a Diabolical Crime, attended with an outrageous Contempt of the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, and the Grace of the Holy Ghost. I will not make here any Application of what has been said to our *Deists, Arians, or Socinians*; but leave

it to them seriously to consider, how far they are concerned in the dreadful Sin which the Apostle describes in the Text, and forewarns us all against; if God peradventure in his infinite Mercy may give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.

And therefore, 3dly and lastly, being well apprized both of our Corruption and Weakness, and likewise of the Wiles of the Enemy of our Salvation; let us watch carefully over ourselves, and avoid with an holy Horror all kinds of Sin. Even those which the World accounts but slight, are directly contrary to the Love and Respect we owe our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and his Gospel: They are so many Steps towards that terrible one, for which *there remains no more Sacrifice*. Therefore we ought, as the Author of this Epistle admonishes us, *Chap. ii. 1. to give the more earnest Heed to the Things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For, as he goes on, ver. 2, 3. if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, and is still preached to us by his Servants? But we must not be diverted from Sin, barely by the Fear of Punishment; that might do under the Law, when the Spirit of Bondage reigned. Under the Gospel, where God has given us the Spirit of Adoption, we ought to obey him by a more generous and noble Motive. And indeed what an inestimable Mercy have we receiv'd from him, that he would give us his Son, to die in our stead, and to obtain us Life by his Death! Would we after that tread under Foot that beloved Son of God, who has suffer'd so much to save us? God forbid! Spend we rather our whole Life in testifying to him, by a religious Obedience, our Respect towards his Divine Person, and our Gratitude for all his Benefits. This*

Son has shed his precious Blood, to be a Ransom for our Souls. Would we count that Blood an unholy thing, or do ought contrary to the Holiness it should produce in us? Both he and his Father send the Spirit into our Hearts, to make us taste in this Life the First-fruits of that unspeakable Joy, which is reserved for us in the next. Would we then grieve that Holy Spirit by our Sins, and do him Despite by our Malice and Rebellion? Renounce we therefore heartily all the false Joy of the World, rather than the Joy of the Holy Ghost should not abide with us; banish we out of our Hearts all that may displease that Divine *Paraclete*, that he may settle with us for ever; being fully assured of this, that after we have faithfully served our Lord *Jesus Christ* here, and been sanctified by his Blood, and used as living Temples by his Spirit, we shall at last be translated into his great Dwelling-place of Heaven, where our Sanctification being completed, we shall reign with him for ever and ever. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant!

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAG. 11. line last, dele 7. after 1. p. 17. l. 23. put *the* after of. p. 19. l. 32. put *as* after *for*. p. 31. l. 22. read *Eljon*. p. 33. l. 17. dele *a* after *is*. l. 28. r. יהוה l. 38. r. יהוה p. 34. l. 3. r. *Mark of the Future Tense*. l. 7. r. *the* after *all*. l. 34. r. יהוה p. 35. l. 4. r. יהוה p. 37. l. 2. r. אללל l. 30. r. *that* after *was*. p. 42. l. 27. dele *i. e.* p. 45. l. 14. r. *that*. p. 46. l. last, r. *dicere*. p. 51. l. 6. put *easily* after *cannot*. l. 8. put *not* after *and*. p. 55. l. 13. r. *that* after *is*. p. 85. l. 32. r. 4068. p. 88. l. 10. r. *art*. l. 31. add *and ever*. p. 89. l. the too last, change the Marks, and transpose the Lines. p. 107. r. *more than fourteen*. p. 110. l. 34. put, after *Points*. p. 115. l. 9. r. *possessed*. p. 118. l. 14. put, after *commands*. p. 129. l. 27. put? p. 131. l. last, r. *art*. p. 134. l. 4. put *thou* after *but*. l. 13. r. *Psalms* xc. 4. p. 144. l. 25. r. *loved*. p. 180. l. 28. r. *same* instead of *twelve*. p. 183. l. 12. r. *that*. p. 199. l. 23. r. *Apollinaris*. p. 203. l. 22. r. *point of*. p. 214. l. 14. r. *Condition*. p. 225. l. 12. r. *esse*. l. last, put after p. p. 237. l. 8. r. *the whole Verse*. p. 238. l. 12. r. *then*. p. 246. l. 33. r. *John*. p. 255. l. 23. r. *she*. p. 281. l. 12. r. *these*. p. 287. l. 26. r. *Jerem*. Besides some Mistakes in Letters, and Points, which the sensible Reader will easily correct.

